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The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.



"ND hero is the letter, Julia," said L'Estrange, as they sat at tea together that same evening. "Here is the letter; and if I were as clever a casuist as Colonel Bramleigh thought me, I should perhaps know whether I have the right to read it or not."

"Once I have begun to discuss such a point, I distrust my judgment; but when I pronounce promptly, suddenly, out of mere woman's instinct, I have great faith in myself."

"And how does your woman's instinct incline here?"

"Not to read it. It may or may not have been the writer's intention to have sealed it; the omission was possibly a mere accident. At all events, to have shown you the contents would have been a courtesy at the writer's option. He was not so inclined—"

"Stop a bit, Julia," cried he, laughing. "Here you are arguing the case, after having given me the instinctive impulse that would not wait for logic. Now, I'll not stand 'floggee and preachee' too."

"Don't you see, sir," said she, with a mock air of being offended,  
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"that the very essence of this female instinct is its being the perception of an inspired process of reasoning, an instinctive sense of right, that did not require a mental effort to arrive at."

"And this instinctive sense of right says, Don't read?"

"Exactly so."

"Well, I don't agree with you," said he, with a sigh. "I don't know, and I want to know, in what light Colonel Bramleigh puts me forward. Am I a friend? am I a dependant? am I a man worth taking some trouble about? or am I merely, as I overheard him saying to Lord Culduff, 'a young fellow my boys are very fond of?'"

"Oh, George. You never told me this."

"Because it's not safe to tell you anything. You are sure to resent things you ought never to show you have known. I'd lay my life on it that had you heard that speech, you'd have contrived to introduce it into some narrative or some description before a week went over."

"Well, it's a rule of war, if the enemy fire unfair ammunition, you may send it back to him."

"And then," said L'Estrange, reverting to his own channel of thought, "and then it's not impossible that it might be such a letter as I would not have stooped to present."

"If I were a man, nothing would induce me to accept a letter of introduction to any one," said she, boldly. "It puts every one concerned in a false position. 'Give the bearer ten pounds' is intelligible; but when the request is, 'Be polite to the gentleman who shall deliver this; invite him to dine; present him to your wife and daughters; give him currency amongst your friends;' all because of certain qualities which have met favour with some one else; why, this subverts every principle of social intercourse; this strikes at the root of all that lends a charm to intimacy. I want to find out the people who suit me in life, just as I want to display the traits that may attract others to me."

"I'd like to know what's inside this," said L'Estrange, who only half followed what she was saying.

"Shall I tell you?" said she, gravely.

"Do, if you can."

"Here it is:—'The bearer of this is a young fellow who has been our parson for some time back, and now wants to be yours at Albano. There's not much harm in him; he is well-born, well-mannered, preaches but twelve minutes, and rides admirably to hounds. Do what you can for him; and believe me yours truly.'"

"If I thought——"

"Of course you'd put it in the fire," said she, finishing his speech; "and I'd have put it there though it should contain something exactly the reverse of all this."

"The doctor told me that Bramleigh said something about a reparation that he owed me; and although the phrase, coming from a man in his state, might mean nothing, or next to nothing, it still keeps recurring

to my mind, and suggesting an eager desire to know what he could point to."

"Perhaps his conscience pricked him, George, for not having made more of you while here. I'd almost say it might with some justice."

"I think they have shown us great attention—have been most hospitable and courteous to us."

"I'm not a fair witness, for I have no sort of gratitude for social civilities. I think it's always the host is the obliged person."

"I know you do," said he, smiling.

"Who knows," said she warmly, "if he has not found out that the young fellow the boys were so fond of was worthy of favour in higher quarters? Eh, George, might not this give the clue to the reparation he speaks of?"

"I can make nothing of it," said he, as he tossed the letter on the table with an impatient movement. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Julia," cried he, after a pause. "I'll take the letter over to Castello to-morrow, and ask Augustus if he feels at liberty to read it to me; if he opine not, I'll get him to seal it then and there."

"But suppose he consents to read it, and suppose it should contain something, I'll not say offensive, but something disagreeable, something that you certainly would not wish to have said; will you be satisfied at being the listener while he reads it?"

"I think I'd rather risk that than bear my present uncertainty."

"And if you'll let me, George, I'll go with you. I'll loiter about the grounds, and you can tell Nelly where to find me, if she wishes to see me."

"By the way, she asked me why you had not been to Castello; but my head being very full of other things, I forgot to tell you; and then there was something else I was to say."

"Try and remember it, George," said she, coaxingly.

"What was it? Was it?—no—it couldn't have been about Lord Culduff carrying away the doctor to his own room, and having him there full half-an-hour in consultation before he saw Colonel Bramleigh."

"Did he do that?"

"Yes. It was some redness, or some heat, or something or other that he remarked about his ears after eating. No, no; it wasn't that. I remember all about it now. It was a row that Jack got into with his Admiral; he didn't report himself, or he reported to the wrong man, or he went on board when he oughtn't; in fact, he did something irregular, and the Admiral used some very hard language, and Jack rejoined, and the upshot is he's to be brought before a court martial; at least he fears so."

"Poor fellow; what is to become of him?"

"Nelly says that there is yet time to apologize; that the Admiral will permit him to retract or recall what he said, and that his brother officers say he ought—some of them at least."

"And it was this you forgot to tell me?" said she, reproachfully.

"No. It was all in my head, but along with so many things; and then

I was so badgered and bullied by the cross-examination they submitted me to ; and so anxious and uneasy, that it escaped me till now."

" Oh, George, let us do a good-natured thing ; let us go over and see Nelly ; she'll have so many troubles on her heart, she'll want a word of advice and kindness. Let us walk over there now."

" It's past ten o'clock, Julia."

" Yes ; but they're always late at Castello."

" And raining heavily besides ;—listen to that ! "

" What do we care for rain ? did bad weather ever keep either of us at home when we wished to be abroad ? "

" We can go to-morrow. I shall have to go to-morrow about this letter."

" But if we wait we shall lose a post. Come, George, get your coat and hat, and I'll be ready in an instant."

" After all, it will seem so strange in us presenting ourselves at such an hour, and in such a trim. I don't know how we shall do it."

" Easily enough. I'll go to Mrs. Eady the housekeeper's room, and you'll say nothing about me, except to Nelly ; and as for yourself, it will be only a very natural anxiety on your part to learn how the Colonel is doing. There, now, don't delay. Let us be off at once."

" I declare I think it a very mad excursion, and the only thing certain to come of it will be a heavy cold or a fever."

" And we face the same risks every day for nothing. I'm sure wet weather never kept you from joining the hounds."

This home-thrust about the very point on which he was then smarting decided the matter, and he arose and left the room without a word.

" Yes," muttered he, as he mounted the stairs, " there it is ! That's the reproach I can never make head against. The moment they say, ' You were out hunting,' I stand convicted at once."

There was little opportunity for talk as they breasted the beating rain on their way to Castello ; great sheets of water came down with a sweeping wind, which at times compelled them to halt and seek shelter ere they could recover breath to go on.

" What a night," muttered he. " I don't think I was ever out in a worse."

" Isn't it rare fun, George ? " said she, laughingly. " It's as good as swimming in a rough sea."

" Which I always hated."

" And which I delighted in ! Whatever taxes one's strength to its limits, and exacts all one's courage besides, is the most glorious of excitements. There's a splash ; that was hail, George."

He muttered something that was lost in the noise of the storm ; and though from time to time she tried to provoke him to speak, now, by some lively taunt, now by some jesting remark on his sullen humour, he maintained his silence till he reached the terrace, when he said,—

" Here we are, and I declare, Julia, I'd rather go back than go forward."

" You shan't have the choice," said she laughing, as she rang the bell. " How is your master, William ? " asked she, as the servant admitted them.

" No better, miss ; the Dublin doctor's upstairs now in consultation, and I believe there's another to be sent for."

" Mind that you don't say I'm here. I'm going to Mrs. Eady's room to dry my cloak, and I don't wish the young ladies to be disturbed," said she, passing hastily on to the housekeeper's room, while L'Estrange made his way to the drawing-room. The only person here, however, was Mr. Harding, who, with his hands behind his back and his head bowed forward, was slowly pacing the room in melancholy fashion.

" Brain fever, sir," muttered he, in reply to the curate's inquiry. " Brain fever, and of a severe kind. Too much application to business—did not give up in time, they say."

" But he looked so well ; seemed always so hearty and so cheerful."

" Very true, sir, very true ; but as you told us on Sunday, in that impressive discourse of yours, we are only whitened sepulchres."

L'Estrange blushed. It was so rare an event for him to be complimented on his talents as a preacher that he half mistrusted the eulogy.

" And what else, indeed, are we ? " sighed the little man. " Here's our dear friend, with all that the world calls prosperity ; he has fortune, station, a fine family, and—"

The enumeration of the gifts that made up this lucky man's measure of prosperity was here interrupted by the entrance of Ellen Bramleigh, who came in abruptly and eagerly.

" Where's Julia ? " cried she ; " my maid told me she was here."

L'Estrange answered in a low tone. Ellen, in a subdued voice, said,—

" I'll take her up to my room. I have much to say to her. Will you let her remain here to-night ? —you can't refuse. It is impossible she could go back in such weather." And without waiting for his reply, she hurried away.

" I suppose they sent for you, sir ? " resumed Harding. " They wished you to see him ? " and he made a slight gesture, to point out that he meant the sick man.

" No ; I came up to see if I could say a few words to Augustus—on a matter purely my own."

" Ha ! indeed ! I'm afraid you are not likely to have the opportunity. This is a trying moment, sir. Dr. B., though only a country practitioner, is a man of much experience, and he opines that the membranes are affected."

" Indeed ! "

" Yes ; he thinks it's the membranes ; and he derives his opinion from the nature of the mental disturbance, for there are distinct intervals of perfect sanity—indeed, of great mental power. The Colonel was a remarkable man, Mr. L'Estrange ; a very remarkable man."

" I've always heard so."

"Ah, sir, he had great projects—I might call them grand projects, for Ireland, had he been spared to carry them out."

"Let us still hope that he may."

"No, no, sir, that is not to be; and if Belton be correct, it is as well, perhaps, it should not be." Here he touched his forehead with the top of his finger, and gave a glance of most significant meaning.

"Does he apprehend permanent injury to the brain?"

The other pursed his mouth, and shook his head slowly, but did not speak.

"That's very dreadful," said L'Estrange, sadly.

"Indeed it is, sir; take this from us," and here he touched his head, "and what are we? What are we better than the beasts of the field? But why do I say this to you, sir? Who knows these things better than yourself?"

The curate was half inclined to smile at the ambiguity of the speech, but he kept his gravity, and nodded assent.

"Nobody had the slightest conception of his wealth," said Harding, coming up, and actually whispering the words into the other's ear. "We knew all about the estates property; I did at least, I knew every acre of it, and how it was let; but of his money in shares, in foreign securities, on mortgages, and in various investments; what he had out at venture in Assam and Japan, and what he drew twenty-five per cent. from in Peru; —of these, sir, none of us had any conception; and would you believe it, Mr. L'Estrange, that he can talk of all these things at some moments as collectedly as if he was in perfect health? He was giving directions to Simecox about his will, and he said, 'Half a sheet of note-paper will do it, Simecox. I'll make my intentions very clear, and there will be nobody to dispute them. And as to details of what little—he called it little!—I possess in the world, I want no notes to aid my memory.' The doctor, however, positively prevented anything being done to-day, and strictly interdicted him from hearing any matters of business whatsoever. And it is strange enough, that if not brought up before him, he will not advert to these topics at all, but continue to wander on about his past life, and whether he had done wisely in this, or that, or the other, mixing very worldly thoughts and motives very oddly at times with those that belong to more serious considerations. Poor Mr. Augustus," continued he, after a short breathing moment. "He does not know what to do! He was never permitted to take any part in business, and he knows no more of Bramleigh and Underwood than you do. And now he is obliged to open all letters marked immediate or urgent, and to make the best replies he can, to give directions, and to come to decisions, in fact, on things he never so much as heard of. And all this while he is well aware that if his father should recover, he'll not forgive him the liberty he has taken to open his correspondence. Can you imagine a more difficult or painful situation?"

"I think much of the embarrassment might be diminished, Mr. Harding, by his taking you into his counsels."

"Ah! and that's the very thing I'll not suffer him to do. No, no, sir, I know the Colonel too well for that. He may, when he is well and about again, he may forgive his son, his son and heir, for having possessed himself with a knowledge of many important details; but he'd not forgive the agent, Mr. Harding. I think I can hear the very words he'd use. He said once on a time to me, 'I want no Grand Vizier, Harding; I'm Sultan and Grand Vizier too.' So I said to Mr. Augustus, 'I've no head for business after dinner, and particularly when I have tasted your father's prime Madeira.' And it was true, sir; true as you stand there. The doctor and I had finished the second decanter before we took our coffee."

L'Estrange now looked the speaker fully in the face; and to his astonishment saw that signs of his having drank freely—which, strangely enough, had hitherto escaped his notice—were now plainly to be seen there.

"No, sir, not a bit tipsy," said Harding, interpreting his glance; "not even what Mr. Cutbill calls 'tight!' I won't go so far as to say I'd like to make up a complicated account; but for an off-hand question as to the value of a standing crop, or an allowance for improvements in the case of a tenant-at-will, I'm as good as ever I felt. What's more, sir, it's three-and-twenty years since I took so much wine before. It was the day I got my appointment to the agency, Mr. L'Estrange. I was weak enough to indulge on that occasion, and the Colonel said to me, 'As much wine as you like, Harding—a pipe of it, if you please; but don't be garrulous.' The word sobered me, sir—sobered me at once. I was offended, I'll not deny it; but I couldn't afford to show that I felt it. I shut up; and from that hour to this I never was 'garrulous' again. Is it boasting to say, sir, that it's not every man who could do as much?"

The curate bowed politely, as if in concurrence.

"You never thought me garrulous, sir?"

"Never, indeed, Mr. Harding."

"No, sir, it was not the judgment the world passed on me. Men have often said Harding is cautious, Harding is reserved, Harding is guarded in what he says; but none have presumed to say I was garrulous."

"I must say I think you dwell too much on a mere passing expression. It was not exactly polite; but I'm sure it was not intended to convey either a grave censure or a fixed opinion."

"I hope so; I hope so, with all my heart, sir," said he pathetically. But his drooping head and depressed look showed how little of encouragement the speech gave him.

"Mr. Augustus begs you'll come to him in the library, sir," said a footman, entering, and to L'Estrange's great relief, coming to his rescue from his tiresome companion.

"I think I'd not mention the matter *now*," said Harding, with a sigh. "They've trouble and sickness in the house, and the moment would be unfavourable; but you'll not forget it, sir, you'll not forget that I want the expression recalled, or at least the admission that it was used inadvertently."

L'Estrange nodded assent, and hurried away to the library.

"The man of all others I wanted to see," said Augustus, meeting him with an outstretched hand. "What on earth has kept you away from us of late?"

"I fancied you were all a little cold towards me," said the curate, blushing deeply as he spoke; "but if I thought you wanted me, I'd not have suffered my suspicion to interfere. I'd have come up at once."

"You're a good fellow, and I believe you thoroughly. There has been no coldness; at least, I can swear, none on my part, nor any that I know of elsewhere. We are in great trouble. You've heard about my poor father's seizure—indeed you saw him when it was impending, and now here am I in a position of no common difficulty. The doctors have declared that they will not answer for his life, or, if he lives, for his reason, if he be disturbed or agitated by questions relating to business. They have, for greater impressiveness, given this opinion in writing, and signed it. I have telegraphed the decision to the Firm, and have received this reply, 'Open all marked urgent, and answer.' Now, you don't know my father very long, or very intimately, but I think you know enough of him to be aware what a dangerous step is this they now press me to take. First of all, I know no more of his affairs than you do. It is not only that he never confided anything to me, but he made it a rule never to advert to a matter of business before any of us. And to such an extent did he carry his jealousy—if it was jealousy—in this respect, that he would immediately interpose if Underwood or the senior clerk said anything about money matters, and remark, 'These young gentlemen take no interest in such subjects; let us talk of something they can take their share in.' Nor was this abstention on his part without a touch of sarcasm, for he would occasionally talk a little to my sister Marion on bank matters, and constantly said, 'Why weren't you a boy, Marion? You could have taken the helm when it was my watch below.' This showed what was the estimate he had formed of myself and my brothers. I mention all these things to you now, that you may see the exact danger of the position I am forced to occupy. If I refuse to act, if I decline to open the letters on pressing topics, and by my refusal lead to all sorts of complication and difficulties, I shall but confirm him, whenever he recovers, in his depreciatory opinion of me; and if, on the other hand, I engage in the correspondence, who is to say that I may not be possessing myself of knowledge that he never intended I should acquire, and which might produce a fatal estrangement between us in future? And this is the doubt and difficulty in which you now find me. Here I stand surrounded with these letters—look at that pile yonder—and I have not courage to decide what course to take."

"And he is too ill to consult with?"

"The doctors have distinctly forbidden one syllable on any business matter."

"It's strange enough that it was a question which bore upon all this brought me up here to-night. Your father had promised me a letter

to Lady Augusta at Rome, with reference to a chaplaincy I was looking for, and he told Belton to inform me that he had written the letter and sealed it, and left it on the table in the library. We found it there, as he said, only not sealed; and though that point was not important, it suggested a discussion between Julius and myself whether I had or had not the right to read it, being a letter of presentation, and regarding myself alone. We could not agree as to what ought to be done, and resolved at last to take the letter over to you, and say, If you feel at liberty to let me hear what is in this, read it for me; if you have any scruples on the score of reading, seal it, and the matter is ended at once. This is the letter."

Augustus took it, and regarded it leisurely for a moment.

"I think I need have no hesitation here," said he. "I break no seal, at least."

He withdrew the letter carefully from the envelope, and opened it.

"Dear Sedley," read he, and stopped. "Why, this is surely a mistake; this was not intended for Lady Augusta;" and he turned to the address, which ran, "The Lady Augusta Bramleigh, Villa Altieri, Rome." "What can this mean?"

"He has put it in a wrong envelope."

"Exactly so, and probably sealed the other, which led to his remark to Belton. I suppose it may be read now. 'Dear Sedley—Have no fears about the registry. First of all, I do not believe any exists of the date required; and secondly, there will be neither church, nor parson, nor register here in three months hence.'" Augustus stopped and looked at L'Estrange. Each face seemed the reflex of the other, and the look of puzzled horror was the same on both. "I must go on, I can't help it," muttered Augustus, and continued: "'I have spoken to the dean, who agrees with me that Portshandon need not be retained as a parish. Something, of course, must be done for the curate here. You will probably be able to obtain one of the smaller livings for him in the Chancellor's patronage. So much for the registry difficulty, which indeed was never a difficulty at all till it occurred to your legal acuteness to make it such.'

"There is more here, but I am unwilling to read on," said Augustus, whose face was now crimson, "and yet, L'Estrange," added he, "it may be that I shall want your counsel in this very matter. I'll finish it." And he read, "'The more I reflect on the plan of a compromise the less I like it, and I cannot for the life of me see how it secures finality. If this charge is to be revived in my son's time, it will certainly not be met with more vigour or more knowledge than I can myself contribute to it. Every impostor gains by the lapse of years—bear *that* in mind. The difficulties which environ explanations are invariably in favour of the rogue, just because fiction is more plausible often than truth. It is not pleasant to admit, but I am forced to own that there is not one amongst my sons who has either the stamina or the energy to confront such a peril; so that, if the battle be really to be fought, let it come on while I am yet here, and in health and vigour to engage in it.'

"There are abundant reasons why I cannot confide the matter to any of my family—one will suffice: there is not one of them except my eldest daughter who would not be crushed by the tidings, and though she has head enough, she has not the temper for a very exciting and critical struggle."

"What you tell me of Jack and his indiscretion will serve to show you how safe I should be in the hands of my sons, and he is possibly about as wise as his brothers, though less pretentious than the diplomatist; and as for Augustus, I have great misgivings. If the time should ever come when he should have convinced himself that this claim was good,—and sentimental reasons would always have more weight with him than either law or logic,—I say, if such a time should arrive, he's just the sort of nature that would prefer the martyrdom of utter beggary to the assertion of his right, and the vanity of being equal to the sacrifice would repay him for the ruin. There *are* fellows of this stamp, and I have terrible fears that I have one of them for a son."

Augustus laid down the letter and tried to smile, but his lip trembled hysterically, and his voice was broken and uncertain as he said: "This is a hard sentence, George,—I wish I had never read it. What can it all mean?" cried he, after a minute or more of what seemed cruel suffering. "What is this claim? Who is this rogue? and what is this charge that can be revived and pressed in another generation? Have you ever heard of this before? or can you make anything out of it now? Tell me, for mercy's sake, and do not keep me longer in this agony of doubt and uncertainty."

"I have not the faintest clue to the meaning of all this. It reads as if some one was about to prefer a claim to your father's estate, and that your lawyer had been advising a compromise with him."

"But a compromise is a sort of admission that the claimant was not an impostor,—that he had his rights?"

"There are rights, and rights! There are demands, too, that it is often better to conciliate than to defy,—even though defiance would be successful."

"And how is it that I never heard of this before?" burst he out indignantly. "Has a man the right to treat his son in this fashion? to bring him up in the unbroken security of succeeding to an inheritance that the law may decide he has no title to?"

"I think that is natural enough. Your father evidently did not recognize this man's right, and felt there was no need to impart the matter to his family."

"But why should my father be the judge in his own cause?"

L'Estrange smiled faintly: the line in the Colonel's letter, in which he spoke of his son's sensitiveness, occurred to him at once.

"I see how you treat my question," said Augustus. "It reminds you of the character my father gave me. What do you say then to that passage about the registry? Why, if we be clean-handed in this business, do we want to make short work of all records?"

"I simply say I can make nothing of it."

"Is it possible, think you, that Marion knows this story?"

"I think it by no means unlikely."

"It would account for much that has often puzzled me," said Augustus, musing as he spoke. "A certain self-assertion that she has, and a habit, too, of separating her own interests from those of the rest of us, as though speculating on a time when she should walk alone. Have you remarked that?"

"*I! I!*" said L'Estrange, smiling, "remark nothing! there is not a less observant fellow breathing."

"If it were not for those words about the parish registry, George," said the other, in a grave tone, "I'd carry a light heart about all this; I'd take my father's version of this fellow, whoever he is, and believe him to be an impostor; but I don't like the notion of foul play, and it does mean foul play."

L'Estrange was silent, and for some minutes neither spoke.

"When my father," said Augustus—and there was a tone of bitterness now in his voice—"When my father drew that comparison between himself and his sons, he may have been flattering his superior intellect at the expense of some other quality."

Another and a longer pause succeeded.

At last L'Estrange spoke:—

"I have been running over in my head all that could bear upon this matter, and now I remember a couple of weeks ago that Longworth, who came with a French friend of his to pass an evening at the cottage, led me to talk of the parish church and its history: he asked me if it had not been burnt by the rebels in '98, and seemed surprised when I said it was only the vestry-room and the books that had been destroyed. 'Was not that strange?' asked he; 'did the insurgents usually interest themselves about parochial records?' I felt a something like a sneer in the question, and made him no reply."

"And who was the Frenchman?"

"A certain Count Pracontal, whom Longworth met in Upper Egypt. By the way, he was the man Jack led over the high bank, where the poor fellow's leg was broken."

"I remember; he of course has no part in the story we are now discussing. Longworth may possibly know something. Are you intimate with him?"

"No, we are barely acquainted. I believe he was rather flattered by the very slight attention we showed himself and his friend; but his manner was shy, and he is a diffident, bashful sort of man, not easy to understand."

"Look here, L'Estrange," said Augustus, laying his hand on the other's shoulder. "All that has passed between us here to-night is strictly confidential, to be divulged to no one, not even your sister. As for this letter, I'll forward it to Sedley, for whom it was intended. I'll tell him

how it chanced that I read it ; and then—and then—the rest will take its own course."

"I wonder if Julia intends to come back with me ?" said L'Estrange after a pause.

"No. Nelly has persuaded her to stay here, and I think there is no reason why you should not also."

"No. I'm always uncomfortable away from my own den ; but I'll be with you early to-morrow ; good-night."

Nelly and Julia did not go to bed till day-break. They passed the night writing a long letter to Jack—the greater part being dictated by Julia while Nelly wrote. It was an urgent entreaty to him to yield to the advice of his brother officers, and withdraw the offensive words he had used to the Admiral. It was not alone his station, his character, and his future in life were pressed into the service, but the happiness of all who loved him and wished him well, with a touching allusion to his poor father's condition, and the impossibility of asking any aid or counsel from him. Nelly went on—"Remember, dear Jack, how friendless and deserted I shall be if I lose you ; and it would be next to losing you to know you had quitted the service, and gone heaven knows where, to do heaven knows what." She then adverted to home, and said, "You know how happy and united we were all here, once on a time. This has all gone : Marion and Temple hold themselves quite apart, and Augustus, evidently endeavouring to be neutral, is isolated. I only say this to show you how, more than ever, I need your friendship and affection ; nor is it the least sad of all my tidings, the L'Estranges are going to leave this. There is to be some new arrangement by which Portshandon is to be united to Lisconnor, and one church to serve for the two parishes. George and Julia think of going to Italy. I can scarcely tell you how I feel this desertion of me now, dearest Jack. I'd bear up against all these and worse—if worse there be—were I only to feel that you were following out your road to station and success, and that the day was coming when I should be as proud as I am fond of you. You hate writing, I know, but you will, I'm sure, not fail to send me half-a-dozen lines to say that I have not pleaded in vain. I fear I shall not soon be able to send you pleasant news from this, the gloom thickens every day around us, but you shall hear constantly." The letter ended with a renewed entreaty to him to place himself in the hands and under the guidance of such of his brother officers as he could rely on for sound judgment and moderation. "Remember, Jack, I ask you to do nothing that shall peril honour ; but also nothing in anger, nothing out of wounded self-love."

"Add one line, only one, Julia," said she, handing the pen to her and pushing the letter before her ; and without a word Julia wrote :—"A certain coquette of your acquaintance—heartless of course as all her tribe—is very sorry for your trouble, and would do all in her power to lessen it. To this end she begs you to listen patiently to the counsels of the present letter, every line of which she has read, and to believe that in yielding something

—if it should be so—to the opinion of those who care for you, you acquire a new right to their affection, and a stronger title to their love."

Nelly threw her arm round Julia's neck and kissed her again and again.

"Yes, darling, these dear words will sink into his heart, and he will not refuse our prayer."

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### MARION'S AMBITIONS.

COLONEL BRAMLEIGH'S malady took a strange form, and one which much puzzled his physicians: his feverish symptoms gradually disappeared, and to his paroxysms of passion and excitement there now succeeded a sort of dreary apathy, in which he scarcely uttered a word, nor was it easy to say whether he heard or heeded the remarks around him. This state was accompanied by a daily increasing debility, as though the powers of life were being gradually exhausted, and that, having no more to strive for or desire, he cared no more to live.

The whole interest of his existence now seemed to centre around the hour when the post arrived. He had ordered that the letter-bag should be opened in his presence, and as the letters were shown him one by one, he locked them, unopened and unread, in a despatch-box, so far strictly obedient to the dictates of the doctor, who had forbidden him all species of excitement. His family had been too long accustomed to the reserve and distance he observed towards them to feel surprised that none were in this critical hour admitted to his confidence, and that it was in presence of his valet, Dorose, the letters were sorted and separated, and such as had no bearing on matters of business sent down to be read by the family.

It was while he continued in this extraordinary state, intermediate as it seemed between sleeping and waking, a telegram came from Sedley to Augustus, saying,—“Highly important to see your father. Could he confer with me if I go over? Reply at once.” The answer was,—“Unlikely that you can see him; but come on the chance.”

Before sending off this reply, Augustus had taken the telegram up to Marion's room, to ask her advice in the matter. “You are quite right, Gusty,” said she, “for if Sedley cannot see papa, he can certainly see Lord Culduff.”

“Lord Culduff,” cried he, in amazement. “Why, what could Lord Culduff possibly know about my father's affairs? How could he be qualified to give an opinion upon them?”

“Simply on the grounds of his great discrimination, his great acuteness, joined to a general knowledge of life, in which he has admittedly few rivals.”

“Grant all that; but here are special questions, here are matters

essentially personal ; and with all his lordship's tact and readiness, yet he is not one of us."

" He may be, though, and very soon too," replied she, promptly.

" What do you mean ? " asked he, in a voice of almost dismay.

" Just what I say, Augustus ; and I am not aware it is a speech that need excite either the amazement or the terror I see in your face at this moment."

" I am amazed ; and if I understand you aright, I have grounds to be shocked besides."

" Upon my word," said she, in a voice that trembled with passion, " I have reason to congratulate myself on the score of brotherly affection. Almost the last words Jack spoke to me at parting were, ' For God's sake, shake off that old scamp ; ' and now you—that hold a very different position amongst us—you, who will one day be the head of the family, deliberately tell me you are shocked at the prospect of my being allied to one of the first names in the peerage."

" My dear Marion," said he, tenderly, " it is not the name, it is not the rank, I object to."

" Is it his fortune, then ? I'm sure it can't be his abilities."

" It is neither. It is simply that the man might be your grandfather."

" Well, sir," said she, drawing herself up, and assuming a manner of intense hauteur, " and if I—I conclude I am the person most to be consulted—if I do not regard this disparity of years as an insurmountable obstacle, by what right can one of my family presume to call it such ? "

" My dear sister," said he, " can you not imagine the right of a brother to consult for your happiness ? "

" Happiness is a very large word. If it were for Nelly that you were interesting yourself, I've no doubt your advice and counsel ought to have great weight ; but I am not one of your love-in-a-cottage young ladies, Gusty. I am, I must own it, excessively worldly. Whatever happiness I could propose to myself in life is essentially united to a certain ambition. We have as many of the advantages of mere wealth as most people : as fine equipage, as many footmen, as good a cook, and as costly silver ; and what do they do for us ? They permit us simply to enter the lists with a set of people who have high-stepping horses and powdered lacqueys like ourselves, but who are no more the world, no more society, than one of papa's Indiamen is a ship of the Royal Navy. Why do I say this to you, who were at Oxford, who saw it all,—ay, and felt it all,—in those fresh years of youth when these are sharp sufferings ? You know well—you told me your griefs at the time—that you were in a set without being ' of it ; ' that the stamp of inequality was as indelibly fixed upon you as though you were a corporal and wore coarse cloth. Now, these things are hard to bear for a man, for a woman they are intolerable. She has not the hundred and one careers in life in which individual distinction can obliterate the claims of station. She has but one stage—the *salon* ; but, to her, this narrow

world, soft-carpeted and damask-curtained, is a very universe, and without the recognized stamp of a certain rank in it, she is absolutely nothing."

"And may not all these things be bought too dearly, Marion?"

"I don't know the price I'd call too high for them."

"What! Not your daily happiness? not your self-esteem? not the want of the love of one who would have your whole heart in his keeping?"

"So he may, if he can give me the rank I care for."

"Oh, Marion! I cannot think this of you," cried he, bitterly.

"That is to say, that you want me to deceive you with false assurances of unbought affection and the like; and you are angry because I will not play the hypocrite. Lord Culduff has made me an offer of his hand, and I have accepted it. You are aware that I am my own mistress. Whatever I possess, it is absolutely my own; and though I intend to speak with my father, and, if it may be, obtain his sanction, I will not say that his refusal would induce me to break off my engagement."

"At all events, you are not yet this man's wife, Marion," said he, with more determination than he had yet shown; "and I forbid you positively to impart to Lord Culduff anything regarding this telegram."

"I make no promises."

"You may have no regard for the interests of your family, but possibly you will care for some of your own," said he, fiercely. "Now, I tell you distinctly, there are very grave perils hanging over us at this moment—perils of which I cannot measure the amount nor the consequences. I can only dimly perceive the direction from which they come; and I warn you, for your own sake, make no confidences beyond the bounds of your own family."

"You are superbly mysterious, Gusty; and if I were impressionable on this kind of matter, I half suspect you might terrify me. Papa ought to have committed a forgery, at least, to justify your dark insinuations."

"There is no question of a forgery; but there may be that which, in the end, will lead to a ruin as complete as any forgery."

"I know what you mean," said she, in a careless, easy tone; "the bank has made use of private securities and title-deeds, just as those other people did—I forget their names—a couple of years ago."

"It is not even that; but I repeat the consequences may be to the full as disastrous."

"You allude to this unhappy scrape of Jack's."

"I do not. I was not then thinking of it."

"Because as to that, Lord Culduff said there never yet grew a tree where there wasn't a branch or two might be lopped off with advantage. If Jack doesn't think his station in life worth preserving, all the teaching in the world won't persuade him to maintain it."

"Poor Jack!" said he, bitterly.

"Yes, I say, poor Jack! too. I think it's exactly the epithet to apply to one whose spirit is so much beneath his condition."

" You are terribly changed, Marion. I do not know if you are aware of it ? "

" I hope I am. I trust that I look at the events around me from a higher level than I have been accustomed to hitherto."

" And is my father in a state to be consulted on a matter of this importance ? " asked he, half indignantly.

" Papa has already been spoken to about it ; and it is by his own desire we are both to see him this evening."

" Am I the only one here who knew nothing of all this ? "

" You should have been told formally this morning, Augustus. Lord Culduff only waited for a telegram from Mr. Cutbill to announce to you his intentions and his—hopes." A slight hesitation delayed the word.

" These things I can't help," said he bitterly, and as if speaking to himself. " They have been done without my knowledge, and regardless of me in every way ; but I do protest, strongly protest, against Lord Culduff being introduced into matters which are purely our own."

" I never knew till now that we had family secrets," said she, with an insolent air.

" You may learn it later on, perhaps, and without pleasure."

" So, then, these are the grave perils you tried to terrify me with a while ago. You forget, Augustus, that I have secured my passage in another ship. Personally, at least, I am in no danger."

" I did forget that. I did indeed forget how completely you could disassociate yourself from the troubles of your family."

" But what is going to happen to us ? They can't shoot Jack because he called his commanding officer an ugly name. They can't indite papa because he refused to be high-sheriff. And if the world is angry with you, Gusty, it is not certainly because you like the company of men of higher station than your own."

He flushed at the sarcasm that her speech half revealed, and turned away to hide his irritation.

" Shall I tell you frankly, Gusty," continued she, " that I believe nothing—absolutely nothing—of these impending calamities ? There is no sword suspended over us ; or if there be, it is by a good strong cord, which will last our time. There are always plenty of dark stories in the City. Shares fall and great houses tumble ; but papa told me scores of times that he never put all his eggs into one basket : and Bramleigh and Underwood will be good names for many a day to come. Shall I tell you, my dear Augustus, what I suspect to be the greatest danger that now hangs over us ? And I am quite ready to admit it is a heavy one."

" What is it ? "

" The peril I mean is, that your sister Nelly will marry the curate. Oh, you may look shocked and incredulous, and cry impossible, if you like ; but we girls are very shrewd detectives over each other, and what I tell you is only short of certainty."

"He has not a shilling in the world; nor has she, independently of my father."

"That's the reason. That's the reason! These are the troths that are never broken. There is nothing aids fidelity like beggary."

"He has neither friends nor patrons; he told me himself he has not the vaguest hope of advancement."

"Exactly so; and just for that they will be married! Now it reminds me," said she, aloud, "of what papa once said to me. The man who wants to build up a name and a family, ought to have few children. With a large household, some one or other will make an unhappy alliance, and one deserter disgraces the army."

"A grave consideration for Lord Culduff at this moment," said he, with a humorous twinkle of the eye.

"We have talked it over already," said she.

"Once for all, Marion, no confidences about what I have been talking of." And so saying he went his way.

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#### CHAPTER XXVI.

##### MR. CUTBILL ARRIVES AT CASTELLO.

On the eve of that day on which the conversation in the last chapter occurred, Mr. Cutbill arrived at Castello. He came full of town news: he brought with him the latest scandals of society, and the last events in politics; he could tell of what was doing in Downing Street, and what was about to be done in the City. In fact, he had the sort of budget that was sure to amuse a country audience, and yet, to his astonishment, he found none to question, none even to listen to him. Colonel Bramleigh's illness had thrown a gloom over all. The girls relieved each other in watches beside their father, and Augustus and Temple dined together alone, as Lord Culduff's gout still detained him in his room. It was as the dinner drew to its close that Mr. Cutbill was announced.

"It ain't serious, I hope? I mean, they don't think the case dangerous?" said he, as he arranged his napkin on his knee.

Augustus only shook his head in silence.

"Why, what age is he? not sixty?"

"Fifty-one—fifty-two in June."

"That's not old; that's the prime of life, especially when a man has taken nothing out of himself."

"He was always temperate; most temperate."

"Just so: even his own choice Mouton didn't tempt him into the second bottle. I remember that well. I said to myself, 'Tom Cutbill, that green seal wouldn't fare so well in your keeping.' I had such a bag of news for him! All the rogueries on 'Change, fresh and fresh. I suppose it is quite hopeless to think of telling him now?"

"Not to be thought of."

"How he'd have liked to have heard about Hewlett and Bell! They're gone for close on two millions; they'll not pay over sixpence in the pound, and Rinker, the Bombay fellow that went in for cotton, has caught it too! Cotton and indigo have ruined more men than famine and pestilence. I'd be shot, if I was a Lord of the Council, if I wouldn't have a special prayer for them in the Litany. Well, Temple, and how are you, all this while?" said he, turning abruptly to the diplomatist, who sat evidently inattentive to the dialogue.

"What, sir; did you address *me*?" cried he, with a look of astonishment and indignation.

"I should think I did; and I never heard you were Premier Earl, or that other thing of England, that you need look so shocked at the liberty! You Foreign Office swells are very grand folk to each other; but take my word for it, the world, the real world, thinks very little of you."

Temple arose slowly from his place, threw his napkin on the table, and turning to Augustus, said, "You'll find me in the library," and withdrew.

"That's dignified, I take it," said Cutbill; "but to my poor appreciation, it's not the way to treat a guest under his father's roof."

"A guest has duties, Mr. Cutbill, as well as rights; my brother is not accustomed to the sort of language you address to him, nor is he at all to blame if he decline to hear more of it."

"So that I am to gather you think he was right?"

Augustus bowed coldly.

"It just comes to what I said one day to Harding: the sailor is the only fellow in the house a man can get on with. I'm sorry, heartily sorry for him." The last words were in a tone of sincere feeling, and Augustus asked,—"What do you mean by sorry? what has happened to him?"

"Haven't you seen it in *The Times*—no, you couldn't, though—it was only in this morning's edition, and I have it somewhere. There's to be a court-martial on him; he's to be tried on board the *Ramsay*, at Portsmouth, for disobedience and indiscipline, and using to his superior officer—old Colthurst—words unbecoming the dignity of the service and the character of an officer, or the dignity of an officer and the character of the service—it's all the one gauge, but he'll be broke and cashiered all the same."

"I thought that if he were to recall something, if he would make some explanation, which he might without any peril to honour——"

"That's exactly how it was, and when I heard he was in a scrape I started off to Portsmouth to see him."

"You did?" exclaimed Augustus, looking now with a very different expression at the other.

"To be sure I did; I went down by the mail-train, and stayed with him till the one-forty express started next day, and I might have saved myself the trouble."

"You could make no impression upon him?"

"Not a bit—as well talk to that oak sideboard there; he'd sit and smoke and chat very pleasantly too, about anything, I believe; he'd tell

about his life up in town, and what he lost at the races, and how near he was to a good thing on the Riddlesworth ; but not a word, not so much as a syllable would he say about his own hobble. It was growing late ; we had had a regular bang-up breakfast—turtle steaks and a devilled lobster, and plenty of good champagne—not the sweet stuff your father gives us down here—but dry 'Mum,' that had a flavour of Marcobrunner about it. He's a rare fellow to treat a man, is Jack ; and so I said—not going about the bush, but bang into the thicket at once—' What's this stupid row you've got into with your Admiral ? what's it all about ? ' "

" ' It's about a service regulation, Master Cutbill,' said he, with a stiff look on him. ' A service regulation that you wouldn't understand if you heard it.'

" ' You think,' said I, ' that out of culverts and cuttings, Tom Cutbill's opinion is not worth much ? '

" ' No, no, not that, Cutbill ; I never said that,' said he, laughing ; ' but you see that we sailors not only have all sorts of technicals for the parts of a ship, but we have technical meanings for even the words of common life, so that though I might call you a consummate humbug, I couldn't say as much to a Vice-Admiral without the risk of being judged by professional etiquette.'

" ' But you didn't call him that, did you ? ' said I.

" ' I'll call *you* worse, Cutty,' says he, laughing, ' if you don't take your wine.'

" ' And now Jack,' said I, ' it's on the stroke of one ; I must start with the express at one-forty, and as I came down here for nothing on earth but to see if I could be of any use to you, don't let me go away only as wise as I came ; be frank, and tell me all about this business, and when I go back to town it will push me hard if I can't do something with the Somerset House fellows to pull you through.'

" ' You are a good-hearted dog, Cutty,' said he, ' and I thought so the first day I saw you ; but my scrape, as you call it, is just one of those things you'd only blunder in. My fine brother Temple, or that much finer gentleman Lord Culduff, who can split words into the thinnest of veneers, might possibly make such a confusion that it would be hard to see who was right or who was wrong in the whole affair ; but *you*, Cutty, with your honest intentions and your vulgar good sense, would be sure to offend every one. There, don't lose your train ; don't forget the cheroots and the punch, and some pleasant books, if they be writing any such just now.'

" ' If you want money,' said I—' I mean for the defence.'

" ' Not sixpence for the lawyers, Cutty ; of that you may take your oath,' said he, as he shook my hand. ' I'd as soon think of sending the wardroom dinner overboard to the sharks.' We parted, and the next thing I saw of him was that paragraph in *The Times*.

" How misfortunes thicken around us. About a month or six weeks ago when you came down here first, I suppose there wasn't a family in the kingdom could call itself happier."

" You *did* look jolly, that I *will* say ; but somehow—you'll not take the remark ill—I saw that, as we rail-folk say, it was a capital line for ordinary regular traffic, but would be sure to break down if you had a press of business."

" I don't understand you."

" I mean that, so long as it was only a life of daily pleasure and enjoyment was before you,—that the gravest question of the day was what horse you'd ride, or whom you'd invite to dinner,—so long as that lasted, the machine would work well,—no jar, no friction anywhere; but if once trouble—and I mean real trouble—was to come down upon you, it would find you all at sixes and sevens,—no order, no discipline anywhere, and, what's worse, no union. But you know it better than I do. You see yourself that no two of you pull together ; ain't that a fact ? "

Augustus shook his head mournfully, but was silent.

" I like to see people jolly, because they understand each other and are fond of each other, because they take pleasure in the same things, and feel that the success of one is the success of all. There's no merit in being jolly over ten thousand a year and a house like Windsor Castle. Now, just look at what is going on, I may call it, under our noses here : does your sister Marion care a brass farthing for Jack's misfortunes, or does he feel a bit elated about her going to marry a viscount ? Are you fretting your heart to ribbons because that fine young gent that left us a while ago is about to be sent envoy to Bogota ? And that's fact, though he don't know it yet," added he, in a chuckling whisper. " It's a regular fair-weather family, and if it comes on to blow, you'll see if there's a storm-sail amongst you."

" Apparently, then, you were aware of what was only divulged to me this evening ? " said Augustus. " I mean the intended marriage of Lord Culduff to my sister."

" I should say I was aware of it. I was, so to say, promoter and projector. It was I started the enterprise. It was that took me over to town. I went to square that business of old Culduff. There was a question to be asked in the House about his appointment that would have led to a debate, or what they call a conversation—about the freest kind of after-dinner talk imaginable—and they'd have ripped up the old reprobate's whole life—and I assure *you* there are passages in it wouldn't do for the *Methodists' Magazine*—so I went over to negotiate a little matter with Joel, who had, as I well knew, a small sheaf of Repton's bills. I took Joel down to Greenwich to give him a fish-dinner and talk the thing over, and we were right comfortable and happy over some red Hermitage—thirty shillings a bottle, mind you—when we heard a yell, just a yell, from the next room, and in walks—whom do you think ?—Repton himself, with his napkin in his hand—he was dining with a set of fellows from the Garrick, and he swaggered in and sat down at our table. ' What infernal robbery are you two concocting here ? ' said he. ' When the waiter told me who were the fellows at dinner together, I

said, "These rascals are like the witches in Macbeth, and they never meet without there's mischief in the wind."

"The way he put it was so strong, there was something so home in it, that I burst out and told him the whole story, and that it was exactly himself, and no other, was the man we were discussing."

"And you thought," said he, "you thought that, if you had a hold of my acceptances, you'd put the screw on me and squeeze me as flat as you pleased. Oh, generation of silkworms, ain't you soft!" cried he, laughing. "Order up another bottle of this, for I want to drink your healths. You've actually made my fortune! The thing will now be first-rate. The Culduff inquiry was a mere matter of public morals, but here, here is a direct attempt to coerce or influence a Member of Parliament. I'll have you both at the Bar of the House as sure as my name is Repton."

"He then arose and began to rehearse the speech he'd make when we were arraigned, and a spicier piece of abuse I never listened to. The noise he made brought the other fellows in from the next room, and he ordered them to make a house, and one was named speaker and another black rod, and we were taken into custody and duly purged of our contempt by paying for all the wine drank by the entire company, a trifle of five-and-thirty pounds odd. The only piece of comfort I got at all was getting into the rail to go back to town, when Repton whispered me, 'It's all right about Culduff. Parliament is dissolved; the House rises on Tuesday, and he'll not be mentioned.'"

"But does all this bear upon the question of marriage?"

"Quite naturally. Your father pulls Culduff out of the mire, and the viscount proposes for your sister. It's all contract business the whole world over. By the way, where is our noble friend? I suppose, all things considered, I owe him a visit."

"You'll find him in his room. He usually dines alone, and I believe Temple is the only one admitted."

"I'll send up my name," said he, rising to ring the bell for the servant; "and I'll call myself lucky if he'll refuse to see me."

"His lordship will be glad to see Mr. Cutbill as soon as convenient to him," replied the servant on his return.

"All my news for him is not so favourable as this," whispered Cutbill, as he moved away. "They won't touch the mine in the City. That last murder, though it was down in Tipperary, a hundred and fifty miles away from this, has frightened them all; and they say they're quite ready to do something at Lagos, or the Gaboon, but nothing here. 'You see,' say they, 'if they cut one or two of our people's heads off in Africa, we get up a gun-brig, and burn the barracoons and slaughter a whole village for it, and this restores confidence; but in Ireland it always ends with a debate in the House, that shows the people to have great wrongs and great patience, and that their wild justice, as some one called it, was all right; and that, sir, *that* does not restore confidence.' Good-night."

CHAPTER XXVII.  
THE VILLA ALTIERI.

THERE is a short season in which a villa within the walls of old Rome realizes all that is positive ecstasy in the life of Italy. This season begins usually towards the end of February and continues through the month of March. This interval—which in less favoured lands is dedicated to storms of rain and sleet, east winds and equinoctial gales, tumbling chimney-pots and bronchitis—is here signalized by all that Spring, in its most voluptuous abundance, can pour forth: vegetation comes out, not with the laggard step of northern climes—slow, cautious, and distrustful—but bursting at once from bud to blossom as though impatient for the fresh air of life and the warm rays of the sun. The very atmosphere laughs and trembles with vitality, from the panting lizard on the urn to the myriad of insects on the grass: it is life everywhere, and over all sweeps the delicious odour of the verbena and the violet, almost overpowering with perfume, so that one feels, in such a land, the highest ecstasy of existence is that same dreamy state begotten of sensations, derived from blended sense, where tone and tint and odour mingle almost into one.

Perhaps the loveliest spot of Rome in this loveliest of seasons was the Villa Altieri. It stood on a slope of the Pincian, defended from north and east, and looking westward over the Campagna towards the hills of Albano. A thick ilex grove, too thick and dark for Italian, though perfect to English taste, surrounded the house, offering alleys of shade that even the noonday's sun found impenetrable; while beneath the slope, and under shelter of the hill, lay a delicious garden, memorable by a fountain designed by Thorwaldsen, where four Naiads splash the water at each other under the fall of a cataract; this being the costly caprice of the Cardinal Altieri, to complete which he had to conduct the water from the Lake of Albano. Unlike most Italian gardens the plants and shrubs were not merely those of the south, but all that the culture of Holland and England could contribute to fragrance and colour were also there, and the gorgeous tulips of the Hague, the golden ranunculus and crimson carnation, which attain the highest beauty in moister climates, here were varied with chrysanthemums and camelias. Gorgeous creepers trailed from tree to tree or gracefully trained themselves around the marble groups, and clusters of orange-trees, glittering with golden fruit, relieved in their darker green the almost too glaring brilliancy of colour.

At a window which opened to the ground—and from which a view of the garden, and beyond the garden the rich woods of the Borghese villa, and beyond these again, the massive Dome of St. Peter's, extended—sat two ladies, so wonderfully alike that a mere glance would have proclaimed them to be sisters. It is true the Countess Balderoni was several years older than Lady Augusta Bramleigh, but whether from temperament or the easier flow of an Italian life in comparison with the more wearing

excitement of an English existence, she certainly looked little, if anything, her senior.

They were both handsome,—at least they had that character of good looks which in Italy is deemed beauty,—they were singularly fair, with large deep-set blue-grey eyes, and light brown hair of a marvellous abundance and silkiest fibre. They were alike soft-voiced and gentle-mannered, and alike strong-willed and obstinate, of an intense selfishness, and very capricious.

"His eminence is late this evening," said Lady Augusta, looking at her watch. "It is nigh eight o'clock."

"I fancy, 'Gusta,' he was not quite pleased with you last night. On going away he said something, I didn't exactly catch it, but it sounded like 'leggierezza'; he thought you had not treated his legends of St. Francis with becoming seriousness."

"If he wanted me to be grave he oughtn't to tell me funny stories."

"The lives of the saints, Gusta!"

"Well, dearest, that scene in the forest where St. Francis asked the devil to flog him and not to desist even though he should be weak enough to implore it—wasn't that dialogue as droll as anything in Boccaccio?"

"It's not decent, it's not decorous, to laugh at any incident in the lives of holy men."

"Holy men then should never be funny, at least when they are presented to me, for it's always the absurd side of everything has the greatest attraction for me."

"This is certainly not the spirit which will lead you to the Church!"

"But I thought I told you already, dearest, that it's the road I like, not the end of the journey. Courtship is confessedly better than marriage, and the being converted is infinitely nicer than the state of conversion."

"Oh, Gusta! what are you saying?"

"Saying what I most fervently feel to be true. Don't you know better even than myself, that it is the zeal to rescue me from the fold of the heretics, surrounds me every evening with monsignori and vescovi, and attracts to the sofa where I happen to sit, purple stockings, and red, a class of adorers, I am free to own, there is nothing in the lay world to compare with; and don't you know too, that the work of conversion accomplished, these seductive saints will be on the look-out for a new sinner?"

"And is this the sincerity in which you profess your new faith? is it thus that you mean to endow a new edifice to the honour of the Holy Religion?"

"Cara mia! I want worship, homage, and adoration myself, and it is as absolute a necessity of my being, as if I had been born up there, and knew nothing of this base earth and its belongings. Be just, my dearest sister, and see for once the difference between us. You have a charming husband, who never plagues, never bores you, whom you see when it is pleasant to see, and dismiss when you are weary of him. He never worries you about money, he has no especial extravagance, and does not much trouble himself

about anything.—I have none of these. I am married to a man almost double my age, taken from another class, and imbued with a whole set of notions different from my own. I can't live with *his* people; my own won't have me. What then is left but the refuge of that emotional existence which the Church offers,—a sort of pious flirtation with a run-away match in the distance, only it is to be Heaven, not Gretna Green."

"So that all this while you have never been serious, Gusta?"

"Most serious! I have actually written to my husband—you read the letter—acquainting him with my intended change of religion, and my desire to mark the sincerity of my profession by that most signal of all proofs—a monied one. As I told the Cardinal last night, Heaven is never so sure of us as when we draw on our banker to go there!"

"How you must shock his eminence when you speak in this way."

"So he told me, but I must own he looked very tenderly into my eyes as he said so. Isn't it provoking?" said she, as she arose and moved out into the garden. "No post yet! It is always so, when one is on thorns for a letter. Now when one thinks that the mail arrives at daybreak, what can they possibly mean by not distributing the letters till evening? Did I tell you what I said to Monsignore Ricci, who has some function at the Post Office?"

"No, but I trust it was not a rude speech; he is always so polite."

"I said that as I was ever very impatient for my letters I had requested all my correspondents to write in a great round legible hand, which would give the authorities no pretext for delay, while deciphering their contents."

"I declare, Gusta, I am amazed at you. I cannot imagine how you can venture to say such things to persons in office."

"My dear sister, it is the only way they could ever hear them. There is no freedom of the press here; in society nobody speaks out. What would become of those people if they only heard the sort of stories they tell each other; besides, I'm going to be one of them. They must bear with a little indiscipline. The sergeant always pardons the recruit for being drunk on the day of enlistment."

The countess shook her head disapprovingly and was silent.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" sighed Lady Augusta. "I wonder what tidings will the post bring me. Will my affectionate and afflicted husband comply with my prayer, and be willing to endow the Church, and secure his own freedom; or will he be sordid, and declare that he can't live without me? I know you'd laugh, dear, or I'd tell you that the man is actually violently in love with me. You've no notion of the difficulty I have to prevent him writing tender letters to me."

"You are too, too bad, I declare," said the other, smothering a rising laugh.

"Of course I'd not permit such a thing. I stand on my dignity, and say, 'Have a care, sir.' Oh, here it comes! here's the post! What! only two letters after all? She's a dun! Madame La Rue, Place Vendôme—the cruellest creature that ever made a ball-dress. It is to tell

me she can't wait ; and I'm so sick of saying she must, that I'll not write any more. And who is this ? The postmark is 'Portshandon.' Oh ! I see ; here's the name in the corner. This is from our eldest son, the future head of the house. Mr. Augustus Bramleigh is a bashful creature of about my own age, who was full of going to New Zealand and turning sheep-farmer. True, I assure you ; he is an enthusiast about independence. Which means he has a grand vocation for the workhouse."

" By what strange turn of events has he become your correspondent ?

" I should say, Dora, it looks ill as regards the money. I'm afraid that this bodes a refusal."

" Would not the shorter way be to read it ? " said the other simply.

" Yes, the shorter, but perhaps not the sweeter. There are little events in life which are worse than even uncertainties ; but here goes :—

" ' MY DEAR LADY AUGUSTA,—

" Castello.

( " A very pretty beginning from my son—I mean my husband's son ; and yet he could not have commenced ' Dearest Mamma.' ")

" ' I WRITE my first letter to you in a very painful moment. My poor father was seized on Tuesday last with a most serious and sudden illness, to which the physician as yet hesitates to give a name. It is, however, on the brain or the membranes, and deprives him of all inclination, though not entirely of all power, to use his faculties. He is, moreover, enjoined to avoid every source of excitement, and even forbid to converse. Of course, under these afflicting circumstances, everything which relates to business in any way is imperatively excluded from his knowledge ; and must continue to be so till some change occurs.

" ' It is not at such a moment you would expect to hear of a marriage in the family, and yet yesterday my sister Marion was married to Lord Viscount Culduff.' "

Here she laid down the letter, and stared with an expression of almost overwhelmed amazement at her sister. " Lord Culduff ! Where's the *Peerage*, Dora ? Surely it must be the same who was at Dresden when we were children ; he wasn't married—there can be no son. Oh, here he is : ' Henry Plantagenet de Lacey, fourteenth Viscount Culduff ; born 9th February, 17—' Last century. Why, he's the patriarch of the peers, and she's twenty-four ! What can the girl mean ? "

" Do read on ; I'm impatient for more."

" ' The imperative necessity for Lord Culduff to hold himself in readiness for whatever post in the diplomatic service the Minister might desire him to occupy, was the chief reason for the marriage taking place at this conjuncture. My father, however, himself was very anxious on the subject ; and, indeed, insisted strongly on being present. The ceremony was accordingly performed in his own room, and I rejoice to say that, though naturally much excited, he does not appear to have sustained any increase

of malady from this trying event. I need not tell you the great disparity of age between my sister and her husband : a disparity which I own enlisted me amongst those who opposed the match. Marion, however, so firmly insisted on her right to choose for herself, and her fortune being completely at her own disposal, that all continued opposition would have been not alone unavailing for the present, but a source of coldness and estrangement for the future.

“ ‘The Culduffs’—(how sweetly familiar)—“the Culduffs left this for Paris this day, where I believe they intend to remain till the question of Lord Culduff’s post is determined on. My sister ardently hopes it may be in Italy, as she is most desirous to be near you.’ ”

“ Can you imagine such a horror as this woman playing daughter to me and yet going into dinner before me, and making me feel her rank on every possible occasion ! All this here I see is business, nothing but business. The Colonel, it would seem, must have been breaking before they suspected, for all his late speculations have turned out ill. Penstyddin Copper Mine is an utter failure ; the New Caledonia Packet Line a smash ! and there’s a whole list of crippled enterprises. It’s very nice of Augustus, however, to say that though he mentions these circumstances, which might possibly reach me through other channels, no event that he could contemplate should in any way affect my income, or any increase of it that I deem essential to my comfort or convenience ; and although in total ignorance as he is of all transactions of the house, he begs me to write to himself directly when any question of increased expense should arise—which I certainly will. He’s a *buon figliuolo*, Dolly—that must be said—and it would be shameful not to develope such generous instincts.”

“ ‘ If my father’s illness should be unhappily protracted, means must be taken, I believe, to devolve his share in business matters upon some other. I regret that it cannot possibly be upon myself ; but I am totally unequal to the charge, and have not, besides, courage for the heavy responsibility.’ ”

“ That’s the whole of it,” said she, with a sigh ; “ and all things considered, it might have been worse.”

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## Haberfeld Treiben in Upper Bavaria.

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READING a short time since some account of the Irish constabulary, I was much struck with one item of the regulations—to the effect that the members of that admirable force must belong to no secret society whatever, with the sole exception of the order of Freemasons. The exception appeared to me remarkable, as I know that in Austria every officer in the army is, on appointment, obliged to sign a declaration “that he does not belong to any secret society whatever, or that if he had previously done so, he will sever his connection with it;” and it is, I believe, understood that the prohibition applies more especially to Freemasonry, which Austria, like Spain, Naples, Bavaria—in fact, all strictly Roman Catholic Governments—seems to consider highly dangerous. And it really seems that secret political societies are more easily formed and developed amongst Roman Catholic populations than elsewhere. Even in the ages prior to the Reformation the same love of secret organizations was conspicuous in certain districts: the Sacred Vehme, as it was called, having flourished especially in the ultra-clerical circle of Westphalia; and even up to the present day there exists a somewhat similar secret organization in a certain ultra-Catholic district of Upper Bavaria. This Haberfeld Treiben (literally, “Oatfield Driving”), as it is called, I propose to give some account of, having had personal opportunity of seeing its working.

It will be, perhaps, well, in the first place, to say a word or two about the Westphalian Vehme, or Fehm, because there is an evident family likeness between that now obsolete institution and the still existing Haberfeld Treiben. It is probable—although by no means certain—that both were instituted about the same period; and although each degenerated in the course of time and became an intolerable nuisance, they were originally called into life for the purpose of attaining landable objects—which, as things then stood, would have been otherwise unattainable.

The Westphalian Vehme dates its origin from the first half of the thirteenth century, although some historians have endeavoured to represent it as having been first instituted by Charlemagne. But there is no trace whatever of its existence at an earlier period than that mentioned above. Moreover, its laws and method of procedure were altogether different, both in spirit and letter, from those introduced by that great monarch; whilst, on the other hand, its organization and procedure resembled, in many respects, that of the Inquisition, founded in 1204, from which it was probably copied.

Westphalia, the sole seat of the Vehme,\* extended somewhat further south than the province which now bears that name, and embraced also a large portion, if not the whole, of Friesland and Oldenburg—forming, in fact, the bulk of the great Duchy of Lower Saxony, under Henry the Lion. This prince was, as we all know, attainted and deprived of both his duchies (Saxony and Bavaria) by the Emperor Barbarossa in 1181, Westphalia being divided between the Archbishop of Cologne, a member of the Anhalt family, and a great number of petty feudal chiefs. The consequence of this was that the whole district fell into a state of anarchy and confusion, every man's hand was against his neighbour, the land was devastated by rapine and deluged with blood.

It was under these circumstances that the inhabitants combined together to protect their lives and properties against the freebooters, Bockreiter, and other vagabonds; and no single authority being found strong enough for the purpose, the secret organization of the Vehme was resorted to—which multiplied the agents without exposing individuals to danger.

But although the organization was secret, it is a mistake to suppose that the procedure was also the same. With the exception of offenders taken red-handed, who were summarily executed—as was the practice in Hungary in proclaimed districts up to the year 1848—all others who were denounced to the Vehme were cited to appear and answer for themselves at open courts, held usually on Tuesday mornings, in daylight, in towns like Dortmund, Paderborn, &c. It was only when the citation was disregarded that the secret procedure took place, the court meeting at some place known only to the initiated, and the sentence, if pronounced, being carried out, without any further ceremony, when and wherever the doomed man could be laid hold on. And almost every respectable member of society being a Wissender—that is, initiated—it was no easy matter for a criminal to escape.

The Haberfeld Treiben, like the Vehme, is, and always has been, confined to one particular district in Upper Bavaria, bounded on the south by the Tyrolese frontier, on the west by the Isar, and on the east by the Chiemsee and the rivers which flow into and out of it. How far that association developed itself in a northerly direction is more difficult to determine, and appears to have varied at different times, but for a long series of years it has never acted north of the line. Wasserburg, Munich, Tölz, Holzkirchen, Miesbach, Tegernsee, Aibling, Rosenheim, and Priem, have been of late years frequently the scenes of the exploits of this society, and the country surrounding these towns may be looked upon as the genuine Haberfeld district.

It is nearly certain that, like its Westphalian counterpart, this Bavarian society must have been originally organized for the purpose

\* In *Anne of Geirstein* Sir W. Scott transplants the Vehme into a part of Germany where it never existed.

of eradicating, or at least counteracting, an evil for which no other remedy could be found, and against which no recognized authority could be brought to bear. But it is impossible now to ascertain how and when this first took place. We shall see presently that there are striking resemblances between the Vehme and the Haberfeld Treiben; but whilst the Vehme attacked all branches of the common criminal law, and in process of time extended its operations even to civil cases and disputes about property, the Haberfeld Treiben applied itself almost exclusively to the preservation of female purity and the punishment of incontinence—especially that of unmarried girls. The Vehme exempted from its jurisdiction all ecclesiastics, and also excluded them from initiation; women and children were also exempted; and, further, Jews, Heathens,\* as being too low, and, finally, the higher nobles, for the opposite reason. The Haberfeld Treiben, on the contrary, left male pecadoilloes untouched, except in so far as the exposure of the female sinner necessarily led to that of her male accomplice; and there is, as I shall presently show, good reason to believe that ecclesiastics were not wholly excluded from membership; whilst it is quite certain that the amours of the Roman Catholic clergy were exposed with equal freedom as those of the laity.

I cannot pretend to offer as simple and satisfactory an explanation of the causes which led immediately to the organization of this very singular institution, as I have been enabled to do with respect to the Vehme, where the motives were very patent; nevertheless, as they must have arisen out of the peculiar circumstances of the population itself and its geographical position, some light may be thrown on the subject by an inquiry into these particulars.

Frederick the Great is reported to have once said that "Bavaria was a paradise inhabited by human beasts," and, as regards general beauty of scenery, the saying is correct enough; but the Bavarians proper,—although certainly very different in many respects from all the other inhabitants of Germany, and usually very rough in their manners, at times very excitable, nay, almost ferocious, and given to *voies de fait*,—do not deserve so harsh a sentence. Some thirty years ago learned books were written to prove that the Bavarians proper are not a Teutonic race, but Celts. At a somewhat later period, in 1848, when the great German movement was inaugurated, this theory was scouted, and its having ever been started attributed to a *marotte* of old King Louis I., who had meanwhile fallen into a certain degree of unpopularity. Still one must acknowledge that there is something very Celtic both in the external appearance and in the proclivities of these Bavarians, especially in the Haberfeld country; and of late years very remarkable and extensive remains of ancient "*Pfahlbauten*," or dwellings built on piles, generally attributed to the Celts, have been discovered in this district, especially in

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\* In those days the Prussians were heathens.

the Chiemsee. A modern philologist, too, Wilhelm Obermüller, has shown that a great number of local names in this very district, and other parts of Southern Germany, are more easily derivable from Celtic roots than those of any other language.

But it may be asked, "What has all this to do with the Haberfeld Treiben?" Simply this: we find the inhabitants of a certain small district adopting a very curious mode of preventing the admixture and contamination of their race, and of ensuring its perpetuation; for in fact the exposure and punishment of incontinence, in the manner described, is scarcely traceable to any other motive; and it naturally suggests itself that this was a distinct race—in fact it is so to the present day in many respects.

But it may seem strange that precautions against admixture of race should have been found necessary or desirable in so remote and apparently secluded a corner of Europe as Upper Bavaria. The topography of the Haberfeld district will, I think, throw some light on this point. One of the great lines of communication between Rome and its colonies on the Rhine was up the valley of the Adige, over the Brenner, down the Inn to Rosenheim, and thence precisely through the heart of the district in question to Augsburg (*Angusta*), and so forth; the remains of the old Roman road are still visible, and indeed partially in use on the line Aibling-Helfendorf and up to the Isar above Munich. Of course I do not mean to say that the Haberfeld Treiben dates from the Roman period, but before the discovery of the passage round the Cape a great deal of the trade with the East followed precisely this same route on its way from Venice to Augsburg, which was a great commercial place and the emporium of the oriental trade in Southern Germany. This must necessarily have brought a great number of strangers of various nationalities into contact with the local population; and it is not difficult to conceive a tribe jealous of the honour of its women, and struggling for its own existence on the great highway of the world, taking measures for the preservation of both; and perhaps for the want of a better explanation of the origin of this very peculiar secret society, we may accept the one offered here. Certain it is that the Haberfeld Treiben has been practised from time immemorial precisely along this line of route and to a short distance to the right and left of it, and nowhere else.

But it is time to descend to particulars and inform the reader as to the constitution and mode of operation adopted by this singular body, which projects as it were from the Middle Ages into our own utilitarian times. Of course nothing authentic in the way of documentary evidence can be expected as to the laws and rules of a secret society; but having conversed with many inhabitants of the district, some of them either actually or at some former period members, I can offer a certain amount of reliable detail.

The members of the Haberfeld body have been always selected from one particular class, married men mostly, the richest and most respectable

peasants of their respective districts, together with a certain proportion of "Bürger"—that is, townspeople, without whose aid it would have been impossible to get at the intelligence required or carry out the proceedings. There seem to have been local chiefs, and a general committee of direction with a president at its head; but there is no reliable information on this point. Unlike the practice of the Vehme, no public meetings were ever held, nor were written or oral citations to appear before the tribunal issued. The Haberfeld society acted always secretly, as the Vehme did when its citations or decrees had been disregarded. Throughout the summer certain fairs and public markets were taken advantage of for the purpose of bringing the local members together in the public-houses and other places of entertainment; and in these resorts, whilst sitting over their beer, all the information required was collected and imparted to the leading men in quiet little knots without attracting observation. Of course all the members were known to each other, either personally or by means of secret signs.

As in the Inquisition and the Vehme, secret denunciation is the leading feature of the organization. The members being distributed in all directions and in every locality, nothing escaped their observation, and things that were done in secret places were in due time denounced and proclaimed publicly. In autumn a general meeting of the chiefs seems to have been regularly held at a particular fair or market, and it is said that a secret conclave was arranged at an inn in the town on a certain day each year, and on this occasion the whole plan of operation for the "season"—that is for the months of November and December—was matured. The whole of these proceedings were, however, conducted with so much caution and cleverness, that although they have been very frequently investigated judicially and with great care, no positive clue could ever be discovered.

Of course, all the members were sworn to secrecy, and no instance is known of the oath having been broken; nevertheless, when the harvest wind began to blow chill over the stubble, that is, at the end of October or beginning of November, a vague rumour would arise that such and such a place was threatened with a Haberfeld Treiben: people would talk about it for a day or so, and then forget it again, till all of a sudden it took place either in the village named, or perhaps a neighbouring one, false alarms being sometimes resorted to in order to distract attention and perplex the authorities.

A potter—a married man, formerly himself a member—with whom I was well acquainted, told me he would some fine morning find in his workshop, either written on paper or chalked on a board, an order to supply a certain number of the gigantic earthenware trumpets used by the Treiber,\* and an indication of the place where they were to be deposited at night in secrecy. These hiding-places were usually some miles from his resi-

\* Made in the shape of an English hunting-horn, but five or six feet long or more.

dence. Subsequently he would find money in payment for these wonderful instruments somewhere on his premises or in his pocket. Naturally, these and similar business orders of the confraternity would get wind occasionally.

At length the great day, or rather night, arrived,—for the Haberfeld Treiben is essentially nightwork,—and about eleven o'clock P.M., when all the inhabitants are snugly rolled up in their feather-beds and blankets, a frightful yell, accompanied by an irregular discharge of fire-arms, and a dire clang of the aforesaid trumpets of pottery, old kettles, and such like musical instruments, announces the fact, and makes many a male and female sinner's cheeks turn pale.

But what has this to do with Oatfield Driving, or how came this name to be adopted? It is not easy to find a satisfactory answer to the latter part of this question. It is asserted that in former times the delinquent females were punished by being forced to run barefooted, and with no other garment than their chemise, over the oat-stubble of the village, whilst they were pursued by the "drivers," armed with birch or hazel rods, which were applied very freely. But there is no evidence that so barbarous a punishment was ever inflicted—and nothing of the sort has ever been attempted within the last hundred years certainly. I think it quite possible—nay, highly probable—that the initial letters (H. F. T.) of the three words Haber Feld Treiben, form simply a nucleus to which the remaining ones were superadded merely to veil the true designation from the uninitiated; and I would suggest that this might have been Heiliger-Fehm-Ting or Ding, one of the names by which that other secret tribunal was known. This, however, I offer merely as a conjecture.

But to return to the Haberfeld Treiben. At about half-past ten or eleven o'clock at night the members of the society may be seen making their way swiftly but silently across the fields and through the woods, by twos and threes, which, as they approach the scene of execution, increase gradually into groups of tens and twenties, each man carrying a loaded gun, pistol, or some other arm, in addition to the trumpets, &c., as also materials for constructing a temporary platform, and torches. The whole body is evidently previously told off in the most regular and methodical manner for the various duties to be performed, as the town or village is immediately surrounded by a double chain of vedettes, with regular supports, one set fronting the surrounding country, and preventing effectually all ingress except to the initiated; whilst the second fronts the place itself, and prevents any person from leaving to give the alarm. This done, well-armed guards, all having their faces blackened or otherwise disguised, march silently to the houses of the magistrates and other authorities, as also to the barracks of the gendarmes, if there be such in the place, and effectually prevent their action. The church tower and belfry is also at once secured, and the bell-ropes cut off. The secret connivance of the clergy has been occasionally proved by its having transpired that the

sexton was ordered, as if casually, to leave the church keys at the parish clergyman's house the preceding evening, after curfew.

Meanwhile the main body takes possession of the market-place, or perhaps some hillock which commands the whole town or village, numerous patrols being in readiness to keep the inhabitants in their houses, and compel the appearance, either at their own doors or at the immediate scene of action, of the delinquents. The platform is erected whilst all this is going on, and at a given signal the torches are lighted, fire-arms discharged, horns blown, kettles beaten, and the opening of the tribunal proclaimed through a huge speaking-trumpet. This is usually the very first intimation the inhabitants receive; the whole of the above preliminaries being carried out with astonishing rapidity, order, and in perfect silence. Should here and there a solitary watchman or other individual happen to be out of doors, such are pounced upon by the patrols, and kept under strict guard as long as is necessary. Any attempt at resistance is perfectly useless, and would be met by coercive measures, extending even to the use of fire-arms.

I have never myself witnessed one of these scenes, although several took place within a very short distance of the town in which I resided for a time, and which was itself threatened, or supposed to be; but persons who had done so described to me the noise as being perfectly terrific, and, combined with the fitting light of the torches falling on the disguised "drivers," almost demoniacal. In that part of Bavaria, especially, all the cattle are permanently housed, and there are frequently some twenty to thirty oxen and cows in one stable; and these, on being suddenly roused from their peaceful rumination by the glare of light and the noise, become terrified, and make wild efforts to break loose, filling the air with their lowings, the numerous dogs joining at the same time in a chorus of howlings.

The "act of accusation" is meanwhile read aloud by some loud-voiced peasant. This document is composed of rudely rhymed verses—what are called Knittel-verse, that is to say, bludgeon-verses, in the broad patois of the district—for the secret tribunal despairs the use of prose, eschews all legal terminology, and has its own poet-laureate. A great deal of broad humour, sometimes blended with really genial ideas, and mostly with a large admixture of coarseness and obscenity, is contained in these rhymes, which are sure to provoke numerous improvisations of a corresponding character from the assessors and assistants of the court.

But what else can be expected from descriptions of intrigues and amorous scenes in which the very words that passed between the parties, and the details of the artifices used to avoid detection, are repeated, from the retentive memories of the secret spies, to the great horror and confusion of the delinquents and the disagreeable surprise of injured wives, husbands, and lovers? One of the most striking and successful hits is when some one of the inhabitants shows marks of delight and satisfaction at

his or her neighbour's and dear friend's secret sins being thus openly exposed, meanwhile blessing their stars at having been more circumspect themselves—till their own catalogue is brought before the public at a sudden turn in the versification. A man was once pointed out to me who had come out on the balcony of his house to enjoy the sport, and been there suddenly hit in this way.

The terrorism exercised by an armed band of this sort is quite sufficient to ensure the appearance—either at their own house-doors, as I have said, or, if these be too remote, on the scene of action itself—of the culprits, who, when their delinquencies have been published, are mercifully permitted to withdraw and hide themselves.

Thus, one by one the marked individuals are brought forward, and when the long scroll has been read right through, at a preconcerted signal the torches are extinguished and thrown away, the earthenware trumpets broken, the platform pulled in pieces, and the whole band disperses as rapidly and secretly as it had assembled. It would be a dangerous matter to attempt pursuit, for the "drivers" are all well armed, and defend themselves and fellows without hesitation.

There was a Haberfeld Treiben at the village of Tegernsee, close to the residence of Prince Charles of Bavaria, in the year 1862, as well as I can recollect, and a patrol of two gendarmes quartered in another village, on hearing the tumult and noise, hastened to the scene of action, in order to endeavour to arrest some of the "drivers." But on making their appearance they were immediately fired on, after a previous challenge to stand, and one gendarme was killed on the spot. As may be supposed, the Government instituted a rigorous inquiry into the matter, but no evidence of any kind whatever could be obtained. Sometimes considerable damage is done in the village by fences being broken down, cattle getting loose in the stables, or forcing their way out and running wild over the country. The one redeeming feature in the proceedings of this secret society is, that all such damages are compensated liberally and promptly: the amount of loss incurred by each individual is easily ascertained by the initiated, who live in the place itself, and by them transmitted to the chiefs; and then the person in question finds some morning—in his jacket pocket, or in the churn or on his table—a parcel containing, in hard cash, a fair and ample remuneration; the certainty of receiving which prevents all recourse to the law and stops people's mouths effectually.

In 1863, as well as I can recollect, there was a great Haberfeld Treiben at Rosenheim; and the telegraph and railroad being put in requisition, troops were brought from Munich. However, they arrived too late, and nothing was discovered but one or two strangers, who, overcome with fatigue, had fallen asleep in a barn several miles distant. No evidence beyond the fire-arms found with them could be procured to connect them with the affair.

Aibling was then threatened, or supposed to be, and troops were sent down—who, in conjunction with the local militia, patrolled every night

for several weeks. Of course the "drivers" did not make their appearance there, but they pounced on a small village called Pang, a few English miles distant, on the direct road to Kufstein. The parish priest was said to have been unpleasantly brought before the public on that occasion ; but it was not easy to ascertain particulars, as the people are very reticent on matters that affect the clergy.

Rosenheim, a tolerably large town on the Inn, just where the railroads from Munich, Innspruck, and Salzburg form their junction, had been long threatened with a visitation ; but it would seem that the "drivers" were deterred from time to time, and as the inhabitants were supposed to be fully determined to oppose force to force, the issue was looked upon with some anxiety. The Archbishop of Munich had at various periods issued warnings against the Haberfeld Treiben : amongst others, on the 16th February, 1866, a pastoral letter threatening excommunication. But all these documents were totally disregarded. Towards the middle of October, 1866, that is to say, at the commencement of the season, there was pretty strong evidence that this secret society was preparing to carry on operations with unusual vigour ; and on the night of the 20th a grand Haberfeld Treiben was performed at Rosenheim, or rather attempted to be performed, for the gendarmerie of the district had been secretly brought into the town, and aided by a company of the local militia, which was kept in readiness to turn out at a moment's warning, they attacked the "drivers" immediately they appeared. A desperate fight ensued, lasting an hour and a half. One of the drivers was killed, several wounded, and seven taken prisoners, upon which the whole band dispersed and fled. Fortunately, there were no casualties on the side of the militia and gendarmes. A considerable quantity of ammunition was also seized, and this was the first severe blow these people ever met with.

As might be expected, they were dreadfully enraged, and letters were sent to several of the Rosenheim people threatening to set the whole town on fire, so that much alarm prevailed till the Government took active measures to prevent a recurrence of similar outrages. It would also appear that there is a strong revulsion in the public feeling as regards this singular society. Hitherto the great majority of the inhabitants of the district were either indifferent, or regarded the Haberfeld Treiben with secret favour ; but of late years, instead of adhering to the original plan of admitting only respectable married men and a few younger ones of established character and credit to the membership of the society, the majority came to consist of dare-devil youths and farm-labourers, so that, as an old peasant said,—

"Formerly the decent people used to 'drive' the scamps and vagabonds, and now the respectable people are driven by the ruffians."

The truth is, that the social and moral condition of the peasantry—of which they were hitherto proud as a class—has been gradually changed by a variety of enactments. Land has been rendered purchasable by

every one in any quantity, and the old peasant farms having become absolutely the property of the former holders, are being gradually split up and subdivided; and thus the elements of which this ancient society formerly consisted are gradually disappearing, and their place is being taken by other and less reputable ones.

Whatever may be thought of the rude manner in which the Haberfeld Treiben was carried out, its ends and objects were laudable enough. The existence of secret societies is, however, in itself a great evil, if only because they are apt to degenerate into the worst and most oppressive kind of tyranny, that of secret denunciation, followed by execution inflicted by invisible agents.

I have only to add that the Bavarian law could only touch the Haberfeld prisoners taken at Rosenheim for the unlawful bearing of arms; and this being only an offence, and not a crime or misdemeanor, they were all necessarily set free on bail within a day or two, and I have never ascertained what punishment was ultimately inflicted on them. We shall see whether the society will dare to repeat its meetings this year. The Archbishop of Munich thought it necessary, on the 2nd November, a few days after the great Rosenheim affair, to issue a new pastoral, actually pronouncing the ban of the church, or the greater excommunication, against all persons taking part in or favouring the Haberfeld Treiben, and forbidding all the priests of the archdiocese to grant absolution to such, except in *articulo mortis* or by his own express permission. Probably this measure will have some effect; however, it is just possible that it may be disregarded, for my good friends in the Haberfeld district of Upper Bavaria are very obstinate and self-willed, and have a great regard for their ancient institutions.

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## Jottings from the Note-Book of an Undeveloped Collector.

### CONCLUSION.

If we may judge by the prices paid by the Marquis of Hertford for some of his specimens of Sévres, and other *chef-d'œuvres* of the Ceramic art, we may consider him to be somewhat of the opinion of Charles Lamb,—“I have an almost feminine partiality for old China. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the China closet, and then for the picture-gallery.”

The taste for pottery and porcelain is of most respectable antiquity. Among Roman collectors no objects of virtù were more highly prized than the “*vasa murrhina*.” The value set upon specimens of this substance is almost incredible. Nero, for instance, gave 300 sestertia (about 2,340*l.*) for a single drinking-cup. When his friend Petronius, director-in-chief of his wine-parties, had been accused of treason, and knew that his property would pass into the possession of the tyrant, he smashed a ladle, equally valuable with Nero’s cup. What the material of these precious articles was is very uncertain. Perhaps it was some rare oriental pebble of onyx or agate. Sir G. Wilkinson suggests fluor-spar, Mr. Marryatt opal glass, which from the oxides in it has deliquesced; but from certain expressions in Latin writers it seems not improbable that it was Chinese porcelain; and this opinion is much strengthened if Sir W. Gell is right in saying that “the porcelain of the East was called *Mirra di Smyrna* to as late a date as 1555.” No fragments of porcelain, however, have been discovered amongst Roman antiquities.

Pottery dried in the sun, or hardened by fire, is of extreme antiquity. The Chinese ascribe the invention of their earthenware to the Emperor Hoang-ti, who began to reign b.c. 2698. The earliest specimens of pottery which possess any real interest as works of art are the vases, &c. usually called Etruscan. They are for the most part of a deep red colour, owing to the large proportion—sometimes as much as twenty-four per cent.—of oxide of iron contained in the clay. The number of these Etruscan vessels in our museums is most astonishing. The British Museum alone possesses about 3,000; and “the total number of vases,” says Mr. Birch, in his valuable *History of Ancient Pottery*, “in public and private collections probably amounts to 15,000.” He gives us instances of the prices which some examples have fetched. A sum of 500*l.* was paid for the Athenæum vases in Lord Elgin’s collection; 8,400*l.* for the vases of the Hamilton collection; Baron Durand’s collection sold, in 1836, for 12,524*l.*; one vase in this collection was purchased for the Louvre for

264*l.*; another, now in the Louvre, with the subject of the youthful Hercules strangling the serpent, was purchased for 240*l.*; another, with the subject of Dejanira, Hercules, and Hyllus, brought 142*l.*; and a *crater*, with the subject of Acamus and Demophon bringing back Æthra, 170*l.*; a Bacchic amphora of the maker Enecias, of the Archaic style, was bought by the British Museum for 142*l.* Some of the finest vases belonging to the Prince of Canino, at the sale in 1837, obtained very high prices: an *anochœ*, with Apollo and the Muses, and a *hydria*, with the same subject, were bought in for 80*l.* each; a *cylinx*, with a love-scene, and another, with Priam redeeming Hector's corpse, brought 264*l.*; an *amphora*, with the subject of Dionysus, and a cup with that of Hercules, sold for 320*l.* each; another brought 280*l.* At Mr. Beckford's sale, the late Duke of Hamilton gave 200*l.* for a small vase with the subject of the Indian Bacchus. But very much larger sums than these have been given at Naples. 500*l.* was given for the vase with gilded figures discovered at Cumæ; only half a century back 8,000 ducats, or 1,500*l.*, was paid to Vivenzio for the vase in the Museo Borbonico, representing the last night of Troy; 1,000*l.* for one with a Dionysiac feast; and 800*l.* for the vase with the grand battle of the Amazons published by Schulz. Large prices continue to be given for fine specimens. At the Castellani sale last year, a drinking-cup, in the form of a horse's head, in black, with ornaments in red and other colours, fetched 120*l.*; a very beautiful terra-cotta sarcophagus, 400*l.*; a vase at the Pourtales' sale, the year before, 860*l.*

Leaving these Etruscan, or, as they are perhaps more correctly called, Italo-Greek vases, there is little if anything worth noticing, excepting perhaps the so-called "Samian" ware—some beautiful specimens of which may be seen in the Roach Smith collection now in the British Museum—till we come to the lustred ware, made probably by the Moors in Spain in the 15th century. Several plateaus of this ware are at South Kensington; and I may specially mention a vase, twenty inches high, with flat expanded handles, and a bowl and ewer; each of these cost 80*l.* Of Italian terracottas, one very pretty one, of the latter part of the same century, is in the same Museum. It represents the Virgin and Child with angels, and was purchased for 300*l.* Early in the succeeding century we come to some very fine examples. Luca della Robbia, tired of his occupation as a worker in metal, took to modelling in clay; and when he had discovered, about 1511, a new glaze for his terra-cottas, containing tin, sand, antimony, and other materials, at first white, then coloured by the addition of metallic oxides, he succeeded in producing works which are deservedly held in high estimation. They are generally of large size—altar-pieces for churches, &c. A very fine altar-piece by him, representing the coronation of the Virgin, is in the Academy of Fine Arts at Genoa. A series of twelve medallions, representing the months, probably of his workmanship, and now at South Kensington, came from the Campana collection. A bust of Christ was purchased at the Piot sale for 80*l.* 16*s.* Other members of the same family produced similar works, specimens of which may be seen at South

Kensington. One, for instance, six feet four by five feet eight, with the Adoration of the Magi, cost 100*l.*; another somewhat larger, with the Virgin giving her girdle to St. Thomas, 120*l.*; and another, with the Annunciation (in this instance the terra-cotta is uncoloured), 150*l.* One of the most important works executed by them was the decoration of the Château de Madrid, the palace of Francis I., on the Bois de Boulogne, upon which 15,000*l.* were spent. It was destroyed in the Revolution.

From the Della Robbia terra-cottas is derived a species of pottery which is of high repute among collectors. It is known by a variety of names,—Majolica, Faenza, Gubbio, Urbino, and Raffaelle ware. About 1115, Nazaredeck, the Moorish king of Majorca, who was said to have had 20,000 Christians in his dungeons, was besieged by the Pisans and slain. Amongst other spoils were several tiles and tablets of painted earthenware, which were brought back to Pisa, and are still to be seen let into the walls of some of the churches there at a great height from the ground. The Italian imitations of these are supposed to have got their name Majolica from the island from which these pieces were brought. Faenza, Gubbio, and Urbino indicate some of its chief places of manufacture, and the name Raffaelle has been given to the ware because that great artist was supposed to have painted some of the specimens himself. At the Bernal sale was a plate, 9½ inches in diameter, which excited a most lively competition. It was described as “a plate of the most rare and interesting character, in very strong colours; the subject believed to be Raffaelle himself and the Fornarina seated in the studio of an artist, who is occupied in painting a plate.” It was originally in the possession of the Duke of Buckingham, and at the Stowe sale fetched 4*l.* At the Bernal sale, under the impression that it was a plate painted by Raffaelle himself, it fetched the very large sum of 120*l.* It is, however, of later date than Raffaelle, and is now ticketed at South Kensington as Caffagiolo?—a place near Florence, where was a castle of the Medici.

It has been often stated that a letter of Raffaelle to a Duchess of Urbino is still extant, telling her that the drawings for certain vases were ready. But the writer of the letter was either Raffaelle dal Colle or R. Ciarla, both of whom are known to have been employed on majolica. The finest specimens were not made till 1540, twenty years after Raffaelle's death. But his drawings were eagerly collected for the decoration of pottery, and particularly by Guidobaldo II. This duke specially employed two artists—Battista Franco for making designs (one fine specimen by him, a plateau twenty-one inches in diameter, belonging to the Queen, is now at South Kensington), and Orazio Fontana to paint them.

The Gubbio ware has a peculiarity confined almost entirely to specimens made there and at Pesaro. This is an iridescent ruby glaze, which shines through the picture afterwards painted on it, and varying with the angle at which the light falls upon it. It was the invention it seems of Maestro Georgio Andreoli of Pavia, who settled at Gubbio in 1498. One of his finest works is an altar-piece, made for the Dominican church at

Gubbio in 1511. It is in three compartments, the centre one representing the coronation of the Virgin. Altogether there are several hundred figures in it. In 1835 it was removed to the Städel Museum at Frankfort.

The manufacture of fine specimens of majolica came to an end because the Dukes of Urbino became so much involved they could no longer afford to keep it up. On the death of the last duke, Francesco Maria II., their magnificent collection of majolica passed into the possession of Ferdinando dei Medici, who carried it to Florence, and there it is still. One portion, however, the vases of the Spezieria (the medical dispensary and laboratory), 380 in number, were given as an offering to our Lady of Loretto. For these vases, Queen Christina of Sweden is said to have offered their weight in gold.

Fine specimens of majolica fetch very large prices. The South Kensington Museum possesses a fine series of the works of Maestro Georgio,—several *fruttieras* which cost from 30*l.* to 50*l.* a-piece; a plateau, eighteen inches in diameter, representing a saint with two dogs, one of his largest and most important works in this branch, which cost 150*l.*; and a vase, about fourteen inches high, from the Soulages collection, 200*l.* A plate, with a very fine portrait of Pietro Perugino, cost the same sum. A beautiful plateau, nearly sixteen inches in diameter, with "the Stream of Life," after a very rare engraving by Robetta, which does not appear to be in the Print Room of the British Museum, was purchased at the Bernal sale by Mr. Fountaine, of Narford Hall, Norfolk, whose collection of majolica is almost unrivalled, for 142*l.* A plateau at the Rattier sale produced 195*l.* Probably the largest price ever given for this ware was for a plate with "the Three Graces," after Marc Antonio, which Mr. Marryatt, in his books on pottery and porcelain calls surpassingly beautiful. At M. Roussel's sale, Mr. Fountaine purchased it for 400 guineas. Of Pesaro specimens, the British Museum purchased a plate with St. Bartholomew in the centre for 41*l.* Of Urbino ware, at the same sale, a very fine dish with Pompey and Cleopatra, now at South Kensington, sold for 50*l.*; a salt-cellar, now in the British Museum, for 61*l.*; a plateau, eighteen inches in diameter, with Moses striking the rock, after a design by Battista Franco, cost 100*l.*; a very pretty group, an organ-player and boy blowing bellows, the same sum; a dish at M. Rattier's sale fetched 187*l.*; and the pair of flasks, or pilgrims' bottles, eighteen inches high, of this or Castel Durante ware—the palace built and ornamented by Francesco Maria II.—now at South Kensington, 250*l.* There were two vases of this ware at the Bernal sale, both purchased by Mr. A. Barker, one for 200*l.*, the other for 220*l.* Of Faenza ware, the British Museum gave 43*l.* 1*s.* for a plate at the Bernal sale; and Baron A. de Rothschild 90*l.* for another very fine one. A *fruttiera* at South Kensington, with the children of Israel gathering manna, from an engraving of Agostino Veneziano after Raffaelle, cost 100*l.*

The manufacture of French faience was encouraged principally by Catherine dei Medici. But I must pass on to a most famous ware—that

of Bernard Palissy. There are few autobiographies so charming and interesting as his. Of humble birth and great talents, the sight of an enamelled earthen cup of great value determined him to discover the secret of its manufacture. " Regardless of the fact," as he tells us, " that I had no knowledge of clays, I began to seek for enamel as a man gropes in the dark." After fifteen or sixteen years of indomitable perseverance, in which his money was exhausted, the palings of his garden, the tables, the very flooring of his house burnt—even his wife's wedding-ring consigned to the crucible—he met with complete success. After all, he died in the Bastile, for his religion, at the age of ninety. It is not everybody that admires the crawling things he decorated his plates with—snails, toads, serpents, and such like creatures—but it cannot be denied that the modelling is most admirable. And there are other exquisite examples of his art besides those he covered with specimens of natural history. And the prices his ware sells at now would have satisfied Palissy himself. At the Bernal sale a dish originally purchased, then broken, for twelve francs, and when mended, bought by Mr. Bernal for 4*l.*, sold for 162*l.*; two specimens belonging to M. Rattier produced 200*l.* and 245*l.*; a dish at South Kensington, from the Pourtale collection, cost 115*l.*; and another, from the Soltikoff collection, twenty inches in diameter, with a border of arabesques, 199*l.*

But the Palissy prices, large as they are, are moderate in comparison with those obtained now-a-days for the ware known to collectors as the faience de Henri Deux. The total number of known specimens of this ware does not amount to more than sixty, and about half of these are in England. Sir A. de Rothschild, for instance, possesses no less than seven. To show the prices which specimens fetch, I need do no more than mention those given for the five examples at South Kensington. A dish cost 140*l.*; a tazza, 180*l.*; a salt-cellar, 3½ inches by 4½, 300*l.*; a tazza and cover, 450*l.*; and a candlestick, 750*l.* Mr. Malcolm, however, gave even a larger sum for a " biberon," at the Pourtale sale, 1,100*l.* Mr. Magniac's ewer is said by Mr. J. C. Robinson to be " in every respect unquestionably the finest and most important specimen of Henri Deux ware now extant." The price paid for it at the Odiot sale was 80*l.*; in all probability it would now realize at least 2,000*l.* The companion ewer to one in the possession of Sir A. de Rothschild is valued by M. Delange at 30,000 francs (1,200*l.*), but would probably, if brought to the hammer, as Mr. Robinson assures us, realize a much greater sum. There is unquestionably a certain degree of prettiness about the ware, but I am afraid I should, except for possible mercenary considerations, prefer Minton's imitations to the originals. The peculiarity about the ware is that the ornaments on it have not been painted, but inlaid with pieces of coloured clays, in patterns previously made in the mould, into which the clay was to be pressed by metal stamps, like those used in ornamental bookbindings. Until very lately nothing was known of its history, but M. Fillon, of Poitiers, has discovered that it was made at Oiron, near Thouars, Deux Sèvres, for Madame Hélène de Han-

gest-Ganlis, widow of Artus Gouffier, and mother of Claude Gouffier, Grand Ecuier de France. Their librarian was the Jean Bernard already mentioned in these "Jottings" as furnishing designs for ornamental bindings. Specimens of an excellent imitation of this ware by Minton can be seen at South Kensington.

The earliest specimens of English pottery that possess much interest are the stoneware of Dr. Dwight or De Witt, of Fulham, whom I shall have to mention again, when I come to speak of porcelain. Many specimens of his "Grès de Cologne" are to be found in collections; but perhaps the most beautiful is in the possession of Mr. C. W. Reynolds, with many other heir-looms of the Dwight family. It is a half-length figure of a child lying on a pillow, with a bouquet of flowers in her hand, and a piece of lace on her forehead. It is inscribed "Lydia Dwight, died March 3, 1672."

Our fine pottery began with Wedgwood. Thanks to Miss Meteyard, we have a complete and most interesting life of this great artist. Very curiously, Mr. Bernal, who collected almost everything, from brown mugs to the pâte tendre of Sèvres, had not a single specimen of Wedgwood in his possession. But Mr. Mayer of Liverpool and Mr. T. de la Rue of London neglected no opportunities of securing the works of one of whom Mr. Gladstone has said, that "beginning from zero, and unaided by national or royal gifts, he produced truer works of art than the works of Sèvres, Dresden, or Chelsea." Perhaps the finest service he ever executed was for the Empress Catherine of Russia. Upon each piece was a different view of the palaces, seats of the nobility, and other remarkable places in England: 1,200 views were required, and three years spent in making them. The service being intended for the Grenouillère, part of a palace near St. Petersburg, a frog is painted on the under-surface of each piece. A cup and saucer of this pattern, but without the frog, is in the Mayer collection. Mrs. Delany mentions the service in her letter to Mrs. Post, 1774:—"I am just returned from viewing the Wedgwood ware that is to be sent to the Empress of Russia. It consists, I believe, of as many pieces as there are days in the year, if not hours. They are displayed at a house in Greek Street, Soho, called Portland House. There are three rooms below and two above filled with it, laid upon tables; everything that can be wanted to serve a dinner. The ground, the common ware, pale brimstone; the drawings in purple, the borders a wreath of leaves; the middle of each piece a particular view of all the remarkable places in the King's dominions, neatly executed. I suppose it will come to a princely price; it is well for the manufacturer, which I am glad of, as his ingenuity and industry deserve encouragement." The price paid is said to have been 8,000*l.*, but even at that price it was far from remunerative to Wedgwood.

Several specimens of his ware are at South Kensington, and among them five of his busts in black jasper—Cato, Zeno, Seneca, Bacon, and Ben Jonson—purchased at various prices from 7*l.* to 15*l.* A still finer

suite is in the interesting and valuable collection of British pottery in the Jermyn Street Museum.

Porcelain differs from earthenware in many particulars, most obviously in transparency. The materials of which it is composed are principally two—infusible alumina (clay) derived from decomposed felspar, and a fusible silica (flint), which is calcined and reduced to powder. The proportion of these two substances is not quite the same in different manufactories, and in some cases other substances, such as phosphate of lime, are mixed with them. The best English Kaolin, or China clay, comes from Lee Moor, Cornwall, and from the Isle of Burbeck. The best French Kaolin is found near Limoges. The Chinese take a long time in preparing their materials—a potter often using what had been mixed by his grandfather. This circumstance gave rise to the whimsical derivation of the word porcelain given in Johnson's *Dictionary*—pour cent années. Porcelain is of very great antiquity, at least in the East. If its date cannot certainly be carried back in China so far as B.C. 185, it cannot be put later than A.D. 88. Japanese porcelain is of nearly equal antiquity. One of the most extensive pieces of porcelain ever executed is the far-famed "Tower of Nankin," made in 1277. It is 330 feet high, in nine stories, covered with enamelled tiles; the colours employed being white, red, blue, green, and brown. It is said to have cost 750,000*l.*

The varieties of China porcelain are very numerous: one of the most famous is the citron yellow, manufactured only for the use of the Emperor, and the exportation of which is prohibited on pain of death. Mr. Beckford had some cups and saucers of this ware, which, at the Fonthill sale in 1823, fetched such large prices that Mr. Bohn tells us, in his edition of the *Bernal Sale Catalogue*, the rage for it was called the yellow fever. Eight guineas, however, does not seem such an absurd price for specimens of a ware of which the Fonthill examples, and those at the Japanese Palace, Dresden, were then and till very lately the only genuine specimens in Europe.

The sacking of the Emperor's Summer Palace at Pekin brought many fine examples of China into Europe. In the Count de Negrom's collection, which was exhibited in London in 1865, were specimens of the imperial yellow porcelain—the rare old gray crackle, which, though it looks as if the glaze had been damaged in the process of manufacture, is really produced by art, and the still rarer dark, ruby-coloured crackle, the glaze of which is said to have been made of pulverized gems. Perhaps the rarest of all is of a yellowish stone-colour, of which Mr. Fortune secured the only specimen he had ever seen. Another favourite variety is the "eggshell," so called from its being usually of extreme thinness, not, as was long believed, from the materials of which it was made. Another variety much prized by the Chinese was the Ting porcelain. A very famous potter, with a very long name, which we may compromise by contracting into Techeau, who lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century, went into the house of a collector, where he saw a tripod of this porcelain. He asked per-

mission to examine it, took its dimensions accurately, and made a drawing of the crackles. Six months afterwards he appeared again with his imitation. He was honest enough, however, to confess that it was an imitation and parted with it for about 12*l.* Some time after another connoisseur saw the tripod, worried till he got permission to purchase it, and it was finally parted with, at a great sacrifice, consented to because it was for a *friend*, for 900 guineas.

Porcelain is as much prized among some of their neighbours as among the Chinese themselves. Sir Thomas Roe tells us that the Great Mogul had one of the gentlemen of his court whipped for breaking a cup, and then sent off to China, at his own expense, to buy another.

As specimens of the prices Chinese porcelain has fetched, I may mention an "eggshell" bottle, 13½ inches high, which sold at the Bernal sale for 25*l.*, and a sea-green one which brought 69*l.* At Mr. Fortune's two sales in 1856 and 1857, a bottle of turquoise crackle realized 50*l.* 10*s.*; another with the imperial dragon on rich crimson ground, 56*l.*; a vase of turquoise crackle, 18 inches high, 131*l.*; and a pair of magnificent vases and covers, 4 feet high, 200*l.* Lady Webster's pair, sold this year, produced 485 guineas; and a pair of cisterns, 815 guineas. The old crackle is so much esteemed in Japan that a genuine specimen readily fetches 300*l.* But the most curious price ever paid was for a set of china now in the grand collection in the "Green Vaults" at Dresden. The Elector Augustus II. obtained it from Frederick I. of Prussia for a company of grenadiers.

The first Oriental porcelain in Europe of which we have any certain knowledge, was brought by the Portuguese about the beginning of the sixteenth century. It was long thought that the earliest attempts at imitating it were made in France, about 1695. The recent researches, however, of Dr. Foresi of Florence have shown that there was a small manufactory of it attached to the laboratory in the Boboli Gardens, which belonged to the Grand Duke Francesco dei Medici about 1580-90. Some ten or fifteen specimens only of this earliest European porcelain have been discovered—some of which it is said have fetched 300*l.* a-piece. Besides the gilded pills of the Medici, they bear a mark representing the cupola of the Cathedral of Florence, and underneath the letter F. The ware has a white ground with blue flowers; but if the specimens I saw at South Kensington so marked a few months ago were really samples of the duke's ware, I don't think his kindest friends could have called it beautiful.

There is not much Italian porcelain worth noticing till we come to the Capo di Monte specimens, produced about 1780. There are some very good and spirited groups of this ware exhibited by the Marquis d'Azeglio, at South Kensington, especially an Apollo and Daphne. Mr. Bernal had several cups and saucers, which sold at prices varying from 31*l.* to 37*l.* A compotière and cover, with figure of Phœbus and the dance of the Hours, sold for 51*l.*

To England, apparently, belongs the honour of the second earliest European porcelain. In 1671 Dr. Dwight had a patent granted to him for having "by his own industry, and at his own proper costs and charges, invented and sett up at Fulham . . . the mystery of transparent earthenware, commonly knowne by the names of porcelaine, or China and Persian ware." He met, however, with such poor encouragement that it is said he burned all his receipts and implements in disgust. No specimens of his porcelain are at present known to be in existence.

The next European porcelain was made by Böttcher, the alchemist, who had fled from Berlin to Dresden, and about 1706 made the discovery whilst seeking for the philosopher's stone. His first productions, made of an artificial paste, were of a reddish or brown colour, and not true porcelain; but about 1715, through the accidental discovery of true kaolin in Saxony, he succeeded in producing real porcelain. Some of his ware was in the Bernal collection; one specimen, a teapot, fetched 16*l.* Specimens of his ware can be seen at South Kensington.

From this beginning sprang the famous manufactory of Dresden china, which has produced so many beautiful works of art. To see it in all its variety we should have to visit the Green Vaults at Dresden; but for fine specimens or rare prices we need not go out of our own kingdom. At the Bernal sale, Sir A. de Rothschild bought a pair of vases, each with two conversations from Watteau, for 99*l.* 15*s.*; and a clock in the form of a temple, eighteen inches high, for 120*l.*; whilst the Marquis of Bath secured a pair of magnificent candelabra, each with a female figure bearing branches for five lights, and two feet high, for 231*l.*

From the Dresden manufactory sprang that of Vienna. About 1719 one of the workmen managed to escape from Meissen, and carried the secret with him. The manufactory, however, at Vienna has never equalled the parent one, though the gilding—a very delicate operation—is most brilliant. The Berlin manufactory owes its origin principally to Frederick the Great, who on occupying Meissen during the Seven Years' War, carried off from Meissen all the most famous workmen.

But I must return to England. The first of our famous china establishments was that of Chelsea. It commenced about 1698, but it was from 1750 to 1761 that its finest specimens were produced. Horace Walpole says:—"I saw yesterday (March 3, 1763) a magnificent service of Chelsea china, which the King and Queen are sending to the Duke of Mecklenburg. There are dishes and plates without number, an épergne, candlestick, salt-cellars, sauce-boats, tea and coffee equipage; in short, it is complete, and cost 1,200*l.*" The Chelsea gilding is very brilliant, the painting first-rate; and though sometimes the details are somewhat overpowering, still the ware is in many respects equal to any porcelain in the world. A magnificent vase of this ware, with a beautiful crimson morone ground—a colour peculiar to this ware—and with the raised ornaments richly gilded, was shown some years ago at Marlborough House. In 1863, Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt remarked, that "at the Bernal sale, a pair of beau-

tiful globular scolloped vases and covers, deep blue, painted with exotic birds, with pierced borders and covers of the highest quality, fetched 110*l.* 5*s.* At the sale of the Angerstein collection, a pair of bleu-de-roi vases, with paintings, were bought by Lord Kilmory for 100 guineas. Another pair, pink and gold ground, with paintings, and with open-work lips, realized 142 guineas. A single vase and cover, from Queen Charlotte's collection, sold for 106 guineas; and a pair of splendid globular vases and covers, with paintings of Bathsheba and Susannah, realized the enormous sum of 208 guineas." But these "enormous sums" have been far exceeded. At Mr. Bernal's sale, a vase, exquisitely painted with groups of figures after Greuze, fetched 219*l.*; whilst a vase and cover, with Venus attired by the Graces, after Guido, 14 inches high, and a pair of others, 12*½* inches high, were sold only a few months since, by Messrs. Foster, for 345 guineas. A set of seven, Mr. Bohn tells us, sold not long since for 3,000*l.*

The Chelsea works were finally removed in 1784, by Mr. Dewsbury, and incorporated with his other works at Derby, so famous for the biscuit figures peculiar to that locality. The secret of making them has been lost, and it was in trying to re-discover it that the beautiful material "Parian" was invented. One of the most beautiful productions of the Derby works was called "cream-ware." It is so rare that but two or three specimens of it are known. Mr. Bernal had no good specimen of Derby china. Lady Webster's dessert-service sold this year for 150 guineas.

About the same date as Derby china is that of Worcester, not considered so good as Chelsea, though superior to Derby. It is at present most worthily represented by Messrs. Kerr and Binns. The dessert-service made for the Queen is considered to be as fine as anything that Sèvres ever produced; their enamel porcelain, again, is most beautiful.

One more English manufactory must be mentioned, that of "Rockingham china," named in compliment to the celebrated Marquis of Rockingham. It is a fine reddish brown, or chocolate colour. It is one of the smoothest and most beautiful wares ever produced. The dessert-service, consisting of 144 plates and 56 large pieces, made for William IV., is said to have cost 5,000*l.*

Nantgarw must not be altogether omitted. Porcelain, however, was only made there during 1814-17; the works then belonged to Mr. Dillwyn, the naturalist.

I must now pass on to Sèvres. This manufactory, originally established at St. Cloud about 1695, was transferred to Sèvres in 1756. The finest specimens were produced from 1751 to 1800, Madame Pompadour being one of its principal patronesses. At first the porcelain was "soft." "Soft" porcelain, as distinguished from "hard," can be scratched with a knife, the other not. The *pâte tendre*, however, of Sèvres was an artificial paste, with no clay at all in its composition, and could be entirely fused. It was a composition of saltpetre, sea-salt, burnt alum, soda, gypsum, and sand. Owing to its composition so much resembling glass,

its firing was most difficult, but this very circumstance enabled the glaze to unite more intimately with the body. About 1768, a chance discovery of kaolin at Limoges gave the manufacturers the power of making hard porcelain, and since 1800 no other kind has been attempted.

Her Majesty has one of the most splendid collections of Sèvres in existence. A good deal of it was obtained at the time of the Peninsular war, through Benoit, a French confectioner in the service of the Prince Regent and Beau Brummell. I must specially mention a bleu-de-roi dessert-service, painted by Dodin, with borders by Le Guay and Prevost, made about 1788-1787. Fifteen other pieces belonging to the same set, and now in private hands, were in the Loan Exhibition, 1862. In the Royal collection are also seventy or eighty vases, many of them of the true *pâte tendre*, and worth from 500*l.* to 1,000*l.* a-piece. Another very magnificent service was made about 1778, for the Empress Catherine II. of Russia: 160 pieces of it were afterwards brought to England, but repurchased (except a few small pieces in the collections of Mr. Napier and Mr. Addington) by the Emperor Nicholas, shortly before the Crimean war.

Fine specimens of Sèvres sell for enormous prices. At the Bernal sale, a cup and saucer painted by Morin sold for 160*l.*; a cabaret by Le Guay, 1775-6, 465*l.*; the Marquis of Hertford gave 871*l.* 10*s.* for a magnificent gros-bleu vase, eighteen inches high; Sir A. de Rothschild 900*l.* for a pair of vases, said to be part of the famous "Roman History" service in possession of her Majesty; 1,417*l.* 10*s.* for a pair of turquoise vases painted by Dodet and Draud; and a higher price still, 1,942*l.* 10*s.*, for another pair of that lovely colour, the Rose du Barry, 14*½* inches high. Mr. Bernal had given 200*l.* for them. At Lady Webster's sale this year a plaque sold for 285 guineas, and a dessert-service, said to be probably the finest set on sale in Europe, of 105 pieces, for 550 guineas—probably the set sold at the Hope sale at Paris in 1855 for 854*l.*; and finally, at the Rickett's sale, a single vase and cover, gros-bleu ground with an exquisite medallion of figures fishing, after Boucher, 16*½* inches high, was purchased for the Marquis of Hertford for the astounding sum of 1,350 guineas.

High prices naturally lead to counterfeits. Many instances might be mentioned; but a passage from an interesting account of an English Workman's visit to the Paris Exhibition which appeared in the *Times* of September 18, is so very instructive that I cannot resist quoting it. "Thirty years ago, when the rage for old Sèvres china was at its highest, a few London dealers in old Sèvres china made large fortunes in purchasing white specimens, and those slightly decorated, and having them repainted and regilt in this country. Their agents in France attended sales and sought every opportunity of buying it; the slight sprigs of flowers were then removed by fluoric acid, and elaborately-painted subjects of flowers, birds, Cupids and figures, chiefly from Boucher and Watteau, were painted in richly-gilt shields, with turquoise, green, and other grounds. White dessert-plates were greedily bought, at prices varying from half-a-guinea

to a guinea, which were resold at from five to ten guineas. In order to deceive the purchaser, the sharp touches of the chaser on the gold were rubbed off by the hand; sometimes a dirty greasy rag was employed to make it look as though it had been a long time in use. To increase the deception, the china thus finished was sent off, redirected in London in French, and knowing old lovers of Sèvres china, with long purses, were apprised that a packet of choice articles, bought of Madame — or at the Duke of —'s sale, had arrived, and they flattered themselves highly in being privileged to see the box opened. . . . The writer has several times seen specimens of his own painting at noblemen's houses, which he was informed were choice productions of the Royal Sèvres works purchased for large sums. . . . Some time ago one of our first and keenest manufacturers purchased a pair of his own vases, believing them to be old Sèvres, and introduced them as examples. They had been bought from his own warehouse in white, were painted by the writer in the old Sèvres style, sold in London, and bought some years after by the manufacturer."

The prices of modern Sèvres are by no means inconsiderable. There is a fine specimen at South Kensington—a vase with celadon-green ground two feet high—which cost 200*l.* Some specimens of modern English porcelain fetch equally large sums. The beautiful vase, four feet six inches high, with exquisitely painted flowers, by Messrs. Copeland, was purchased in 1862 for 262*l.*; and the same sum was given for another vase of Sèvres blue ground, with a broad band of flowers, double handles, and five Cupids as supporters, by Messrs. Minton.

No one who has visited the collection of art treasures at South Kensington can have failed to notice the splendid enamels that have been secured for that institution.

Enamelling is the art of fixing upon any substance a surface of vitreous matter by fusion. The term, however, is restricted now to those cases where the substance is of metal, copper, silver, or gold. Several methods of enamelling have been practised. One, and perhaps the earliest, was the champleve, where the enamelling matter was deposited in cavities previously made in the metal. It is often stated that the Egyptians were acquainted with this method: but in the examples in question, we really only find pieces of hard stone or coloured glass set in cement. The Greeks were really acquainted with the art, but the specimens that have come down to us are very unimportant. In the third or fourth century, however, champleve enamels were made in Gaul and Britain; and we find them again in the Rhenish provinces of Germany about ten centuries later, and at Limoges. One interesting example of German enamel of the twelfth century is the chasse or reliquary at South Kensington, which came from the famous Soltikoff collection. A very beautiful triptych in the same collection, of thirteenth-century work, 14 inches by 8½ inches, representing the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Deliverance from Satan, formerly at Alton Towers, cost 450*l.*

Another method was the cloisonné. In this case, the metal having been previously cut into the required shape, a rim of gold was put round it, deep enough to contain the enamel. The enclosed surface was then divided into as many cells as were necessary to separate the different colours, by thin bands of the same material. In those cells was placed the enamel in powder, which was then fused, and finally polished. This method was the fashionable one under the Byzantine Emperors. The finest specimen now remaining of this class is the Pala d'Oro, made at Constantinople for the altar of St. Mark's, Venice, about 1100. A small portion of this, containing the figure of a saint, may be seen in the Jermyn Street Museum. The shrine at Cologne, containing the skulls of the three kings, is of similar workmanship; and at the Pourtales' sale a plate, originally the cover of a missal, with a representation of St. George and the Dragon, of the eleventh century, sold for 364*l.* The most interesting example of cloisonné enamel in England is the "Alfred Jewel," in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It was found not far from Athelney Abbey, the place to which Alfred retired during the Danish troubles, and where he afterwards founded a monastery. It is somewhat more than two inches long, faced with rock crystal, through which is seen the figure of a saint, holding a *fleur-de-lys* in each hand, representing, no doubt, St. Neot, the King's patron saint. On it is an Anglo-Saxon inscription, which tells us "Alfred ordered me to be wrought." From some expressions in monkish chronicles there is little doubt that it was mounted on a staff, and so carried into battle. The enamel itself may have been made, not in England, but on the Continent.

The next method was to engrave the subject on the plate, which was then covered with translucent enamel. A fine specimen of English work of this style is the gold cup given by King John to the corporation of Lynn.

In the fifteenth century there arose at Limoges a new school of enamellers. The plate was first of all covered with a coating of dark-coloured enamel for shadows, and the subjects then painted upon it. The colours employed were metallic oxides mixed with silica, which of course was fusible at a great heat. Until science came to the aid of the enamellers, they had only a limited number of colours at their command, the high degree of heat to which the plate had to be subjected rendering many desirable tints unavailable. The colours after firing are often quite different from what they would be on a painter's palette; and as a plate had sometimes to undergo as many as twenty-five or thirty firings, one for each layer of colour, and any under or over-firing spoiled the work, and mistakes in drawing could only be corrected with immense difficulty, the process of enamelling, as may easily be imagined, was one of very great tediousness and risk. In the early part of the sixteenth century this method had reached its perfection, and some very beautiful examples will be found at South Kensington and the British Museum.

Of early unsigned enamels, we have, in the former museum, an Adoration of the Shepherds, executed about 1520, which cost 200*l.* By Penicaud,

Junior, is a very magnificent specimen, containing eighteen plaques, a large one in the centre representing the Ascension, and round it seventeen of various shapes, containing other subjects from the life of our Lord. It measures altogether 2 feet 5 by 1 foot 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The price of it was of course considerable—800*l.* Another specimen of the same artist's work is an oval dish, with a representation of the Gathering of Manna, which cost 200*l.* By another artist of the same family, Jean Penicaud III., is a tablet, 7 inches by 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ , with the Saviour in the centre and the twelve Apostles in compartments around it, which cost the same sum. Belonging to the same school, but apparently by Jean Poillevé, who was a goldsmith as well as an engraver, there was at the Bernal sale a silver-gilt casket, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  wide, in which were set five plaques of enamel, representing the Sibyls. Mr. M. T. Smith purchased it for 252*l.*

The prince of enamellers, however, was Leonard Limousin. Like other artists of the same date, 1540–1570, he made use of the designs of Raffaelle, and the exquisite manner in which they are reproduced by this difficult process is quite marvellous. A set of twelve Sibyls, half-length figures, of his work, is in the British Museum. Several other specimens are at South Kensington. A very beautiful tazza, with a representation of Laocoön, cost 85*l.* Many of his works are portraits, of which there were no less than twenty-three in the Loan collection. A plaque at South Kensington, six inches by five, with portrait of Antoine de Bourbon, cost 50*l.* A portrait of a Chancellor of France, somewhat larger, from the Soltikoff collection, cost 100*l.* But a much more important work of his, at the Bernal sale, was a large upright portrait of Catherine dei Medici, of the extraordinary size of eighteen inches by twelve. For this Baron Gustave de Rothschild gave 420*l.* Large as the plate is, it seems to have been a favourite size with the artist, as seven others of similar dimensions were shown at South Kensington in 1862. In some of his later enamels he used a white ground, the credit of which has usually been given to Toutin, who lived about 1630.

By Pierre Raymond, an artist about the same date, a tazza and cover at the British Museum, representing Dido's entertainment to Æneas, from the Bernal sale, cost 80*l.* A triptych at South Kensington, representing Christ bearing the Cross, the Crucifixion, and the Entombment, was purchased for 350*l.* A tazza and ewer at the Pourtale sale, with the battle of the Centaurs and Lapithe, sold for 448*l.*; and a basin, eighteen inches in diameter, with subjects from the history of Adam and Eve, 808*l.*

¶ One of the most productive of the Limoges enamellers was Jean Courtois. His works consist chiefly of articles for use at table—such as dishes, plates, candlesticks, &c. They are very showy. A fine ewer—a representation of an equestrian combat round the body, and some portraits in medallions round the neck—was purchased at the Bernal sale by Mr. Addington for 136*l.* 10*s.* A large oval salver, ornamented with gold, and a picture of the "Passage of the Red Sea," sold at the Pourtale sale for 1,200*l.*

By Jean Court dit Vigier was a work at the same sale which excited a very lively competition. It was the cup presented to Mary Stuart when she became affianced to the Dauphin. On the cover was Diana in a car drawn by stags, and on the inside was "The Festival of the Gods," after Raffaelle. It produced 1,084*l.*

Towards the close of the sixteenth century a more minute style of enamelling was introduced. Specimens of artists of this date will be found at South Kensington. An oval dish, by Francois Limousin, with a youth kneeling by the side of a female, who is pointing to Phœbus in his car, cost 200*l.*; and by Jean Limousin a silver casket, with bacchanalian groups and mediæval figures dancing, executed probably for Marguerite de Valois, cost 1,000*l.* The fashion for Limoges enamels seems to have lasted till about 1620.

About this time the art was practised in other places. Petitot, for instance, who was born at Geneva in 1607, produced some specimens which for colour and finish are most marvellous. His plates are usually small, not more than two or three inches in diameter; but the Duke of Devonshire has a portrait of his, after Vandyke, which measures nearly ten inches by six.

Of modern enamels there are some very fine examples. Perhaps the largest work ever executed in this way upon metal is one belonging to her Majesty—the Holy Family, after Parmegiano, the work of Charles Muss, who died in 1824. It measures about twenty-one inches by sixteen. Another large work is the "Bacchus and Ariadne" of Titian, enamelled by Bone. It measures eighteen inches by sixteen, and was sold for 2,200 guineas. Another very beautiful specimen of his skill is the portrait of Lady Hamilton, as Ariadne. It was painted for Sir W. Hamilton, and afterwards bequeathed to Nelson. It cost 170 guineas, and when sold brought 700.

Fine specimens of mediæval metal-work fetch now and then astounding prices. Fancy a pair of "brass candlesticks," 5½ inches high, fetching 232*l.*! Yet this was the price paid for a pair at the Bernal sale by the Duke of Hamilton. Of course, they had a history. They belonged to Sir Thomas More, knight, whose name and date, 1552, are under the foot. Upon the egg-shaped stem are flowers and leaves enamelled in blue and white. A portrait, however, of Sir T. More, at Hampton Court, shows us that they were not candlesticks but flower-vases; for in that picture these identical objects are represented standing on a table near him, each containing a flower. There are, however, at South Kensington, two candlesticks of Italian work, about 1480–1500, from the Soulages collection, which cost 125*l.* each; and with them, I may mention, a door-knocker, about 1560, which cost 80*l.*, and two sets of bronze fire-dogs which cost 400*l.*

In the same rich collection will be found a bronze mirror case 7½ inches in diameter, inlaid with gold and silver, the work of Donatello about 1450, made for the Martelli family, which cost 600*l.*; and a toilet stand of iron, damascened with gold and silver, with subjects taken from ancient Roman

history ; it measures three feet ten inches high, by two feet one inch wide. It has a metal speculum with a damascened slide, and at the top figures of Venus and Cupid, in bronze gilt. It is of Milanese work, about 1550, made for the royal family of Savoy, and was purchased at the Soltikoff sale for 1,281*l.* As a specimen of early English work, I may mention a beautiful agate goblet mounted in silver gilt, with a carved stem, and with the Bristol hall-mark, 1567, which cost 350*l.*

Fine specimens of ecclesiastical art are to be found in our National collections. The British Museum secured, at the Bernal sale, the "Reliquary of the Kings," in copper gilt, about seven inches in length and height, and four inches wide. It was presented by Pope Eugenius IV. to Philip le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, and contained the relics found in the Chartreux at Dijon in 1430. The price was 66*l.*, Mr. Bernal having given 28*l.* for it. A much more important specimen is at South Kensington. This is a Rhenish-Byzantine work in copper gilt, decorated with champleve enamel, and carved ivory, about 1150. It represents a cruciform domed church, and is ornamented with figures of eighteen Prophets and the twelve Apostles. It was purchased at the Soltikoff sale for 2,142*l.* A retable in gilt metal, repoussé and enamelled and set with gems, was purchased at the same sale for 342*l.* Above is Christ in the act of blessing, below are two Angels, and on the shutters the twelve Apostles. An altar-cross made of plates of rock crystal, the plaques of the cross containing engravings of the Crucifixion and the busts of the Evangelists, whilst the base has representations of the events of the Passion, the work of Valerio Vicentino, who lived 1466-1546, cost 210*l.*; and another altar-cross of Rhenish-Byzantine work, 350*l.* I must also mention besides three crosiers—one of gilt metal, enamelled, of fourteenth-century Italian work, which cost 241*l.*; another of Swiss-German work, of the same date, 418*l.*; and another of carved ivory and gilt metal, of French work, also the same date, 265*l.* They all came from the famous Soltikoff collection.

NOTE.—In my last paper I omitted, by an oversight, all mention of Salviati's imitations of Venetian glass. They are quite as quaint, and in many instances, quite as beautiful, as the originals.

In a letter to *The Times*, dated September 21, Mr. M. A. Shee controverts the account, given in the first part of my Jottings, of the share his father had in the rejection of the Lawrence collection by the nation. In one particular I have to make a correction : the price at which the collection was offered to the British Museum was not 20,000*l.*, but 18,000*l.* Mr. Shee admits that his father "opposed the purchase," but justifies it on the ground that it "did not comprise the entire collection made and left at his death by Sir T. Lawrence," but that "the most valuable portion had been previously withdrawn for private disposal." It must be known to many people whether any such transaction took place ; but it seems strange to talk of the "most valuable portion" being gone, when Oxford could get from the refuse its matchless collection, except perhaps in the gallery of the Uffizi, of Michel Angelo and Raffaelle drawings. Sir T. Lawrence's will, however, is express—it was his "collection of genuine drawings by the old masters" that was to be offered to the nation. Mr. Shee's letter, therefore, would make it no longer a question of his father's taste, but of the honesty of Sir T. Lawrence's executors.

## Dumb Men's Speech.

A BELGIAN EXPERIMENT.

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In what category is speech to be arranged? Amongst all the functions and energies of man by what name will it most correctly be labelled? Shall we call it an endowment, or a faculty, or an art, or what? In short, what *is* speech? Certain very practical results depend upon the answer. Without doing any injustice to the character of rough-and-ready replies, it may be said that the rough-and-ready reply to these questions would be that speech is a gift—perhaps the most eminent of all the gifts bestowed upon man by his Creator, and one, therefore, well adapted for its exalted office of determining the line of severance between the brute creation and humanity. Superficial as such a conclusion unquestionably is, it would almost seem as though it had dictated our mode of procedure in the treatment of the dumb. Say that speech is an endowment of human nature, and it must at once take rank with the other endowments of human nature, with sight and hearing and reason and the rest. It may have its speciality, it may be conspicuous amongst the others for its dignity or its usefulness; but almost insensibly we shall conceive of it as being regulated by the same laws and associated with the same ideas as are attached to the other endowments of man. One of the most obvious and the most unassailable of such ideas is the total incapacity of man himself to confer upon his fellow-man even the faintest semblance of such gifts. And with data like these, it is almost an axiom that, in directing the education of one who is deprived of speech, you must accept his dumbness as a fact which is altogether beyond the reach of hope. You may invest him with substitutes for speech which shall be more or less efficient, but this so-called gift of speech itself it is manifestly futile for human skill to think of bringing into exercise. You will give him some compensation for his loss by evoking some unusual power of observation and by inventing new artifices of expression; you will impart to him a marvellous aptitude in the languages of the hand and of the eye; but this spell of an unalterable silence you will feel that a creative power alone can break.

Such a position seems not only a natural, but almost an inevitable, deduction from the very loose idea that speech is to be classed amongst the endowments of men. The fact that a view of this kind has met with such general acceptance makes us suspect that it probably represents a certain amount of truth upon the subject. Yet we may reasonably challenge it, and ask it whether it fairly embodies the whole truth of the matter? whether it gives us the best possible grasp of all the leading facts, or whether it is not rather calculated to obscure some of the

principal avenues of thought, and consequently to bar some of the most effective lines of action which another aspect would suggest? There is at all events one consideration which affords a presumption, though not a proof, that the classification of speech as a gift is inadequate, if not absolutely incorrect; for it is undoubted that certain of the lower animals are able to acquire a mimicry of speech so perfect as to represent a human articulation to the very life. Now, such a fact, when once established, is immediately fatal to the view in question. Take any one of these natural powers, which are beyond all dispute most properly designated as gifts—powers, that is, demanding no skill or effort on the part of the individual exercising them—and you cannot conceive the possibility of a mimicry of them. You cannot, for instance, imagine a mimicry of sight or of hearing. I say then that the fact that speech *can* be caricatured affords us a presumption that there is something wrong in a classification which groups it with them. The truth probably is that, in the looseness of ordinary conversation, speech has been too often confounded with language. Statements, that is to say, which are perfectly true of language, have been carelessly transferred to speech, and, as might be expected, have by the transfer been rendered hopelessly false. Thus, it may be quite true that language, as the expression of reason, is the noblest and the most distinguishing gift which the Creator has bestowed upon man. But apply such a statement to speech, and we may not only be inclined to dissent from the opinion expressed, but we have some grounds for asking whether it can be accurately called a gift at all.

Following the lead, then, of this presumption, and setting aside for the moment the conception of speech as one of the distinctive gifts of man, let us ask whether it would not be more correctly catalogued as an art—an art which is to be learned, of course, like any other art, by successions of attempt and failure. Through its investiture as an art, it at once assumes its proper place as the correlative of language, which everybody has now learned to call a science. In this view, a correct description of the facts would be something of this kind: Man is supplied with a mechanism which is capable of producing articulate speech, just as he is supplied with a mechanism which is capable of producing, for example, a performance on the pianoforte; but it is for man himself to learn to use this mechanism with competent skill. The question then arises, How does he learn? by what agency is this mechanism to be approached? Obviously through the ear. The art of speech is acquired by imitation. The possessor of this vocal mechanism becomes sensible, through the ear, of the use to which others are putting it, and by continued attempts to produce the same effects which he hears from them he gradually acquires a perfect command over his instrument, and articulates with fluency and ease. Hence we are furnished with an explanation of a well-known fact about the dumb. Most of them are dumb, because they are deaf. They cannot articulate, not because they are deprived of the machinery of articulation, but because they are deprived of the means of learning to put that machi-

nery in motion. The mechanism is there, sometimes without a single flaw in its construction; but it is doomed to stand eternally idle, because the channel through which it is commonly approached is closed. But having got so far, we are immediately confronted with a question which, if it can be answered affirmatively, must revolutionize our procedure with deaf-mutism, must impose upon us the necessity of a general, if not a universal abandonment of the language of the fingers, and will enable us effectually to rescue these wordless sufferers from the terrible isolation of their speechlessness. Granted that a man commonly learns to speak by the almost effortless process of hearing others speak; granted that the machinery of speech is most naturally and most easily set in motion through the intervention of the ear; yet, if this be closed from birth, is there no other channel through which the latent mechanism of articulation can be reached? Is there no other faculty through whose aid these slumbering powers can be stirred into activity, and taught to fulfil the purpose for which they are so well adapted? In a word, is it inevitable, as the conventional treatment of them assumes it is, that the deaf-and-dumb should be despairingly abandoned to their speechlessness? or is it possible to teach the silent lips to speak?

For eighty years past such a possibility has been eagerly asserted by Heinicke and his followers in Germany. The utility of it has been as eagerly denied by the Abbé de l'Epée in France. But facts will speak for themselves. Through the intervention of a Continental friend I was recently enabled to visit an institution in Brussels which demonstrated by actual experiment that such a thing is possible, not only in the case of a picked individual or two gifted with extraordinary intelligence, but (it seems safe to say) in every case, provided that the vocal organs are not rendered fatally imperfect by malformation. Moreover, even in those extremely rare instances where the mechanism of speech was incomplete, they succeeded in producing an approximation to clear utterance, closer or more remote, according to the degree of defectiveness in the organs. So that in that house of the dumb, from the best down to the very worst, every single inmate could speak. The dumb are received there in considerable numbers; the conventional system of teaching them to speak by signs is totally and unexceptionally abandoned, and each individual patient is successfully taught to speak with his lips. Of course, the labour and patience expended in effecting these results is stupendous.

It is not difficult to imagine the almost superhuman self-control that you must have, if you would take a boy who is as deaf as the ground he stands on, and utter an articulate sound before him over and over again, till by seeing your movements he learns to reproduce the sound. In practice, however, the task is no less stupendous than the imagination predicts. Indeed, as I watched their method, it several times occurred to me that these instructors must have thrown up their work in despair if they had not been doing it for the sake of their religion. It was, in truth, in the name of Religion that the whole of this unprecedented labour was under-

taken. In words of their own framing, "to inspire the deaf-and-dumb with the love of our holy religion, to form their hearts to virtue, to develope their intelligence, in short, to restore to God and society this unhappy class—such is the task which we undertake in this house." Technically, moreover, the house was a religious house, as being the retreat of a religious order. It was founded some twenty years ago by an eminent ecclesiastic, so distinguished for his self-sacrificing works of benevolence and charity as to have earned the title of the Vincent de Paul of Belgium. True to the reputation of the founder, a number of clergy attached to a religious brotherhood—Les Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne, whom I found by conversation to be men of high talent and culture,—carried on this work. It was to one of these brethren so engaged—Frère Cyrille—that my Brussels friend presented me. I found him a bright, accomplished man, in the best years of life, dressed in the clerical costume of his country—the long black cassock with that interminable row of small buttons down the front, and his beads hung at the girdle, and the little close-fitting black cap,—known as the Solidee (*Soli Deo*)—just upon the crown of the head. Such is the man who is the leading spirit of this unique establishment. After a little preliminary conversation he proceeded to pilot me through the house. Promising to begin with the most elementary stage of the education, he led me first into a large airy room fitted with ordinary school-room desks, forms, black-boards, diagrams, and the usual apparatus of elementary education. That room indeed was remarkable for the absence of only one of the attributes of a well-appointed schoolroom: there was none of the familiar buzz of plodding school-boys. Here sat some five-and-twenty boys, from seven to twelve years old, in some cases literally struggling to imitate the lip-movements of their teacher, and making thereby noises uncouth and various enough; but so impressive was the silence in the intervals of their attempts, that one quite longed for some of those furtive whispers which all go to make up that impalpable sort of hum which is one of the bugbears of the schoolmaster. These boys were acquiring the first rudiments of the art of speech under the tuition of another of the brethren—also a cassocked ecclesiastic,—who seemed blessed with an amount of forbearance that was quite angelic. The earliest lesson, of course, was the articulation of single open syllables, that is to say, of a consonant with a vowel attached. The process by which this was attained was, I observed, twofold. First, simply the eye of the pupil was used. The teacher articulated in a very marked manner the consonant that was under notice. By signs and gestures the dumb boy was directed to watch the movement minutely and to make it himself. If he succeeded in doing so, all well and good; the object was achieved. But if he failed, as was often the case; if, for example, instead of *ma* he articulated *ba*, then the sense of touch was called in to the rescue. The teacher felt about his own organs to see exactly how they were affected by his articulation of the particular consonant which caused the difficulty. He would find that there was, perhaps, a movement in the throat, or by

the pressure of the fingers against the side of the nose, that a current of air was driven down the nostrils by the articulation in question. Having discovered this, he took the boy's finger and put it to his own (the teacher's) organ and articulated the consonant distinctly and repeatedly, so that the boy should feel exactly what the movement of the part was that was required of him. The boy was then directed to put his finger upon his own throat or nostril, and by his own movements produce the same impression upon his finger as was produced by the articulation of the teacher. A hundred times he would fail; and a hundred times would this much-enduring frère, without the faintest shadow of impatience or irritation, go through the whole ceremonial again.

As we entered the room this method was being applied, I remember, to the syllables of the French word—all the business was conducted in French—*Solide*. The frère had got this word written out upon the black-board, syllable by syllable, and he was articulating it, hissing and biting off the consonants with a most laborious emphasis, and with a considerable pause at the end of each, *So-li-de*. Most of the boys in his class seemed to succeed tolerably well with this word; but the failure of one poor lad served admirably the purpose of giving one an insight into the system of instruction. He found no difficulty in catching the first two syllables, but the last syllable he misapprehended. The frère was quick enough to detect the error, even amid the many voices, in a moment. He singled the boy out to devote some special care to him. “*So, li, de*,” said the frère, making quite an explosion with the last syllable. “*So, li*,” replied the anxious boy, drawing out the vowels to an inordinate length in his care to be right, and then, as though quite lost, gazing about him in bewilderment and dismay: “*re*,” he guessed, after some moments. The frère shook his head; that would not do. “*So, li, de-de, de*,” he repeated. “*So, li*,” said the boy, with great deliberation, and then came the pause of perplexity again; “*ke*,” at last he tried, receiving once more, of course, the shake of the head in reply. That was not right. “*So, li, de, de*,” reiterated this delightfully patient frère, taking the lad's finger and putting it upon the ball of his own throat, that he might feel the movement caused by the articulation of the troublesome sound. The boy immediately nodded his head with evident delight, in token of his having grasped what was meant. Withdrawing his hand from his teacher, he began, “*So, li*,” then, feeling about over his own throat, “*de*,” he said, after a moment's pause, with an apparent certitude that he was saying the right thing. The task was accomplished. “*So, li, de—solide*,” recapitulated the frère. “*Solide*,” said the boy at once, in three distinct but connected syllables.

This amiable and persevering teacher went on to explain to me that having achieved the pronunciation of the consonant, he should be able after some little time to get the lad to pronounce the word as it should be in good French, with a less emphasis upon the last syllable. But this final *e* mute of the French language was, he said, one of their chief difficulties, inasmuch as it ought in correct speech to slip almost inaudibly

off the tongue, whereas they were compelled to teach their boys to give it the same power as any other vowel, for the purpose of getting its accompanying consonant articulated. With characteristic enthusiasm, however, he added, it was only a question of a little more trouble afterwards to soften it down when once the consonant was acquired. While upon this subject he told me that, as a rule, certain consonants came much more easily to dumb pupils than others did. It appeared that *r* was the easiest of all. Several little fellows, who had only just been admitted to the house, had already learned to roll the *r* with a rapidity and continuity that only the Continental throat can accomplish. And it is no injustice to them to say that their newly-acquired power was one which they never seemed to be tired of exercising. In the course of a few minutes four or five of these youngsters rolled out enough *r*'s to supply all the speeches of a parliamentary session.

But when the consonants were safely disposed of, the vowels were sometimes hardly less troublesome than these. In the rudimentary stages of this novel education, mistakes about the vowels were frequent; for example, *do* got pronounced *da*, *me* was mistaken for *mi*,—making sometimes a curious jargon out of a familiar word. But the same calm perseverance on the part of the frère which vanquished the consonants, seemed to make short work of the less formidable obstinacy of a vowel; and in no case did I see him baffled in his endeavour to impart a correct apprehension of the sound. Indeed it was surprising to see how quickly he taught them to read the motions of his lips and to utter monosyllables in reply. Within a short period from their admission I found boys who could correct an error of this kind: the frère would take up a pen, and with an air of interrogation would say to a boy, “*C'est un porte-crayon*,” and the boy would smile and shake his head, and say “*plume*.”

The next stage of this singular education was the acquisition of short, simple sentences. With this aim, not only the black-board, but pictures also were freely used. The practice in this department was to select some object and teach the pupils to enumerate the leading qualities and attributes of it. Thus, for example, a picture of an inkstand was under discussion at the moment of our visit; and on the black-board were chalked such sentences as these: *L'encrerie est rond*; *L'encrerie est noir*; *L'encrerie est ouvert*. A picture of a three-horse diligence furnished material for another lesson. In the picture the leading horse was grey and the two others were black; and the relative positions of these animals supplied endless remarks. By their answers and comments the boys showed that they had the clearest understanding of the whole matter. When they were asked the colour of the front horse, they replied “*gris*;” when the frère said there were two horses in front of the coach and one behind, they laughed and contradicted him; while a perfect roar of merriment was created by his astounding assertion that the three horses were seated on the top of the coach.

After satisfying us upon the rudimentary processes of his establishment, Frère Cyrille conducted us to the room where his own class of advanced

pupils was assembled. Here we found some twenty youths of all ages from about nine to eighteen, who rose as we entered, and, expecting as I was to find a room full of half-dumb people, I must say almost startled me by greeting us with a perfectly articulate "Bonjour, messieurs." If these young men had formerly been dumb and were actually at this moment stone-deaf, here seemed to be an unmistakable triumph for the system of Frère Cyrille. We proceeded to test it. He explained to his class that we were simply visitors, who, out of sympathy with them and a kindly interest, had come to witness their progress. "Asseyez-vous, monsieur," said this vivacious little man, handing me his chair; then turning to his class, "Attention!" he said, in a voice hardly above a whisper. Here was the thing which brought out the fact of their present deafness. Whatever suspicion one might have had before that these pupils could after all, perhaps, hear a little, if only quite a little, just to help things out, this was all blown to the winds in a moment by the whisper of that one word and the visible effect it produced upon the faces in all parts of the room. Here was demonstration of deafness which could not be gainsayed. If these people should prove themselves able to hold a conversation, it must be with the eye alone, one could not help admitting, through which they would apprehend the meaning of another. Frère Cyrille felt that so unusual a procedure required notice. "Monsieur will understand," he said to me in explanation, "that it is unnecessary for me to fatigue myself by speaking loud, as ordinary teachers must; to them it is indifferent whether I thunder or whisper, and for me the latter is easier." He continued accordingly in the same very subdued voice, which was only just audible even to me, sitting, as I was, close to him, and giving me thereby every moment accumulating proof, which I could not help feeling was thoroughly conclusive, that the assembly was really deaf. "Attention!" once more. "Je me propose de voyager jusqu'à Londres, et je voyagerai tout le long par le chemin de fer." Some of the young men laughed, some shrugged their shoulders. "Mais pourquoi non?" said Frère Cyrille.

"Ce n'est pas possible," replied several voices.

"Eh bien, comment dois-je voyager?" continued Cyrille, addressing one of the most eager-looking of the group.

"Chemin de fer jusqu'à Ostende," he rejoined unhesitatingly.

"Et après ça?"

"Bateau-à-vapeur," was the immediate reply.

Frère Cyrille then undertook to go over some of the ground they had traversed in the course of that morning's lessons. His instruction was exceedingly clever, but the subjects were not of any particular interest. There was one question, however, which was amusingly illustrative of a little piece of national vanity; and when I heard the cut-and-dried answer to it, I could not help wondering whether it did not contain the very fact to which the French troops were making a sarcastic allusion at Waterloo, when they coupled the Belgians with the epithet which has never left them,—les braves Belges. Selecting the youth who was to reply,—"Comment

César a-t-il rendu la justice à nos ancêtres ? " Frère Cyrille asked. The answer was given with a mechanical precision which almost suggested that both question and answer had been learned from a catechism. " Il a dit dans ses Commentaires que les Belges sont le peuple le plus brave de la Gaule." So long, however, as the questions were asked by the teacher himself, there was obviously the risk of a suspicion in the spectator's mind that these dumb people had not been really taught to speak with the freedom which is indispensable for speech being of any practical use, but rather that by dint of an almost inconceivable amount of labour they had been crammed, like parrots, with a few select phrases, which, upon occasion, they could parade before a wondering stranger. Frère Cyrille was far too acute a man for the liability of such a suspicion to escape him ; and, by virtue of his integrity, he could afford to challenge it. He was polite enough to offer me the opportunity of verifying his results.

" But monsieur will converse with them himself ; his voice is quite strange to them, yet if he will speak with only ordinary distinctness, they will understand him perfectly well, and will make him replies." Now this was very polite, but it was rather a trial for me as well as for them. The youth sitting at my elbow, to whom I should most naturally address any remark I had to make, happened to be, by a considerable difference, the smallest and youngest boy in the room. One may get on with the adult world of the Continent pretty well, but it is not always pleasant to have to air your French to a youngster whose legs are dangling from his chair. You are apt to become sensible in the midst of it that the proceeding is not altogether the most dignified one in which you might be engaged. However, it had to be done, so I began at once to the little fellow next me, asking the simplest of all possible questions, both for my own sake and for his. " Mon enfant, quel âge avez-vous ? " I said, dividing the syllables carefully and distinctly. I naturally was prepared to find that the utterance of a stranger and a foreigner might occasion him some little difficulty, and should accordingly have been very well satisfied with a somewhat hesitating reply. My surprise was proportionately great when he instantly tossed it off in a clear and agreeable voice, " J'ai neuf ans, monsieur." But this was not all. In answer to my surprise, Frère Cyrille assured me that so complete was the education of the eye and the responsiveness of the tongue under his system, that if something were said to them in a language which they did not understand, these youths would be able to repeat the words after the speaker. " For example," he continued, " you will easily believe that they do not know one single word of English ; we have quite enough to do to acquire our vernacular French and Netherlandish ; yet if you select one of my pupils and say something in English, he will be able to say it after you." Accordingly, I selected one of them, and said to him, *Cler-gy-man*. *Cler-gy-man* immediately said the youth, with a perfect articulation, but without having the faintest idea of what he was talking about.

The examples I have enumerated here are some only out of many

similar tests which I applied to ascertain the degree to which the power of speech had been developed by human agency in these dumb people. By their uniform success I was compelled to admit that the fact of their ability to converse freely upon any given topic was indisputably established. That, of course, was patent. But it was not so easy to believe that these dumb-born youths who now were conversing with you in this glib fashion, were still, one and all, perfectly stone-deaf. The completeness of their speech and the readiness of their replies, almost prevented your believing that they could not hear. Indeed, it would have been quite impossible to believe this but for the fact that they were manifestly independent of the sense of hearing. Their replies, both to Frère Cyrille and to myself, made it evident that they understood us equally well, whether we spoke in our ordinary voice or whether we employed a whisper, moving the lips only, but producing no sound perceptible at the other end of the room. The eye was evidently their organ of apprehension. Frère Cyrille could teach them to speak, but he could not teach them to hear.

As for the tone of the voices in which they spoke, I remarked almost every shade of quality amongst them—from the most natural and agreeable voice of an ordinary speaker down to the most hideous parody of a voice, accompanied with a struggling effort at articulation which certainly was generally intelligible, but always painful to a spectator. This latter, however, was extremely rare. I think I saw only two instances of it through the whole house; and in both it was the index of malformation. In the majority of cases the voices were like ordinary voices, varying, as others do, in degrees of pleasantness, but presenting no character which would suggest that they belonged to people who once were dumb.

One curious fact was mentioned to me by Frère Cyrille. He said that he found more difficulty with those who had become deaf-and-dumb subsequently to birth than with those who were so born. I found also that, next to the one or two instances of malformation, the worst speakers were those who had lost their voice from disease. Possibly their memories of sound; slender though they might be, disqualified them for that assiduous and undivided attention to the culture of the eye which the rest had no alternative but to give. Whether this be so or otherwise, Frère Cyrille seemed to attach no small importance to having a monopoly of his pupils' entire energy for this one aim—speaking with the mouth. He spoke as though a division of their efforts—part being directed to this and part to learning the language of signs—would have been fatal to his prospects of success. Accordingly, the ordinary practice of conversing with the fingers was totally banished from the institution. There was no encouragement of a dumb youth on his first admission to make use of his fingers until such time as he could learn the use of his tongue; but from the very first his instruction was entirely based upon articulate speech, and his power of communicating with his fellows was measured by his success in acquiring it.

It was marvellous to see how speedily this unity of purpose achieved

its end. In the space of a year and a half these deaf, but no longer dumb, lads learned to speak perfectly well, after which their newly-acquired art was employed upon the usual branches of education. It would be almost too much, perhaps, to say that there are absolutely no cases of dumbness, apart from malformation, in which an attempt to teach the art of speech would be a failure. But Frère Cyrille did not seem to think that there was any case in which it would be impossible. He would not despair even of the most unpromising. While speaking to him on this part of the subject, he told me a little story which illustrated it. A peasant had recently brought to him his little son, a boy of seven years old, who never had either heard or spoken. The poor fellow was in the greatest distress at the apparent hopelessness of his son's case. His coming to the home of these amiable brethren was but a forlorn hope. "Ah, sir," he said to Frère Cyrille, "I've been advised to come and hear what you have to say, but you'll be able to do nothing with him. I've had him with me these seven years, and I can't get a sound out of him."

"Well, at all events, we can try," was the reply; "and if you will wait, we will have the first lesson in your presence."

"So," said Frère Cyrille to me, "I placed myself in front of the boy, directed his attention to my lips, and articulated to him *pe*"—the *e* was sounded as the French *e* mute—"till at last the boy began to say *pe* too. I advanced a step farther, and the end was that, after the patience of a few minutes, the boy said *papa* to his father before he left the room." The latter was at once amazed and delighted with such a result. He gladly and gratefully confided his boy to the protection of the brethren, and at the period of my visit to them the boy was in a fair way of learning to speak freely and distinctly.

Incredible as such results as these appear, the possibility of achieving them was long ago foreseen. I have in my possession an old book in the Latin language, printed in Germany so early as 1667, in which the author urges *a priori* arguments which led him to expect that the making a dumb man speak was quite within the limits of the possible, and then adds the story of a man in whose case he actually realized the possibility. Curiously enough, this learned gentleman goes on to prove that the languages of the East—and more particularly the Hebrew language—are more readily acquired by a dumb man than the languages of Europe, our own English tongue being branded as notoriously the most unintelligible of all. The reasoning is singular. The whole position is, of course, rested upon the old exploded belief that square-headed Hebrew was the one primæval language spoken by man in the days of his early innocence. The modern square-headed characters (without apparently a suspicion that there was any earlier type) are derived from the forms which the human tongue assumes in articulating the several letters of the Hebrew language; hence the human tongue has a natural aptitude for that language above all others. Throw in the consideration that the broad vowels of the East cannot be skipped over with that indecorous glibness to which the vowels of our less

dignified Western speech fall such victims, and you have a complete proof that the dumb can be easily taught to speak Hebrew! So, at any rate, this learned German proves it to his own satisfaction, if not to ours. But though we may be at liberty to dissent from the details of his conclusion, distorted as they were by the cramped views of philological science then prevalent, yet there is no doubt that, in his prediction of the possibility of teaching the dumb to articulate with the lips, and to converse at will with their contemporaries, he was entirely right. The receptivity of the taught has, since his time, been demonstrated by experiment in numerous and varied instances. The requisite qualifications of the teacher it might not be so easy to secure. This was the only respect in which the institution I have been describing was really exceptional. Frère Cyrille and his *confrères* were not ordinary men. Such labours as theirs money could not buy. No hireling services could ever fix themselves upon their end with that intensity of purpose which is indispensable to the success of such a task. The earlier stages of it seem as hopeless as the actual results are (it must be confessed) incredible. The patience which they demand is something quite beyond the reach of ordinary men. "Monsieur will have to say it fifty times," I remarked commiseratingly to one of these brethren as he was drumming a syllable into a speechless little creature. "Ah ma foi, often five hundred and fifty times," was his reply. No mere salaried labour would be likely to face a prospect such as that. Nothing but a conviction, nothing but a conscious self-sacrifice for the sake of an idea—for it is ideas and not material expectations that are, after all, the most potent influence upon individuals as well as upon nations—nothing but the enthusiasm of an idea, and that too a religious idea, could vitalize the energies of a man under the irksomeness of a drudgery like that. These men were doing it for the sake of their religion, and that was the secret of their success. This work was simply the particular expression of religious devotion which they had chosen to adopt. It was the one thing they had to think of, the one object they had to live for; and in this unity of purpose lay their strength. The same feelings amongst ourselves might not express themselves in precisely the same forms in which theirs are clothed; but this theory of success we should be obliged to learn from them. An acquaintance with such results as theirs might have the effect of modifying, might even almost revolutionize, our own practice in the treatment of the dumb. There can be no reason why our own dumb should not be taught to speak and so be rescued from that terrible isolation which has been hitherto accepted as their destiny, just as well as these Continental mutes. But if they are to be so taught, the task will be accomplished, not by the sort of man who would do well enough for the mere routine of keeping boys in order, giving a few hours' languid brainless attendance in return for a scanty maintenance, but by men of ability, of enthusiasm, and, above all, of self-control; by men of large intellectual resources, who approach it not as an instrument of remuneration, but as a labour of Christian love.

## Country Life.

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It is unquestionable that in many respects the difference between town and country people which was notorious half a century ago, has been gradually rubbed off by the more rapid communication now established between London and the provinces, as well as by the expansion of journalism and the diffusion of literature. It is impossible for the rising generation of the present day, even in the remotest rural districts, to grow up in that contempt for city life which was embodied in the word "cockney," and that complete independence and self-reliance which were common in the reign of George III. All peculiarities of dress, moreover, have now totally disappeared; and a majority of the ancient customs are fast upon the wane. That with these has disappeared, too, something of that simple politeness and that natural dignity for which the better class of our farmers and peasantry were once distinguished, is what few will be surprised to hear who know the effects produced on unrefined natures by their first introduction to a new and more advanced civilization. Moreover, when every man's place is fixed, so that he has no ambition to rise beyond it, his manners are naturally easier and his self-respect and self-possession more complete than when he is agitated by doubts of his real position in society, and uncertain whether every individual who speaks to him be not underrating his pretensions. That old rustic dignity, then, which was once unquestionably a fact, and a mark of difference between himself and the townsman which the countryman was entitled to set down to the credit side of the account, is now almost extinct—extinct, like that home-brewed ale, a liquor of superlative merit to be found only in farm-houses, which has now given way before the mightier currents of Bass and Allsopp, irrigating both town and country with equal stream, and swamping local independence even in the matter of beer.

But notwithstanding the obliteration of many personal peculiarities and provincial habits which formerly made town and country people so different from each other that you could distinguish them at a moment's notice, there is still left in rural life enough character of its own to make it an interesting study; while the moral differences which have always existed between the two classes of the community are probably far less weakened than even the physical and intellectual ones.

Among old customs which are gradually perishing from among the *pagani* of these islands, two of the most pleasing are the harvest-home and

the village Feast or wake. What sort of thing an old-fashioned harvest-home really was our readers may learn for themselves out of *Adam Bede* so much better than we can describe it, that we shall attempt no picture of it here. It is sufficient to say that the substitution for it of one common festival, celebrated by the whole village under the auspices of the clergyman, and preceded by service in the church, is just of a piece with most of the other changes which country life has undergone. It tends to banish a certain degree of coarseness at the expense of a certain degree of heartiness. The personal relation between master and man is not so closely kept up under the new system; but it has more religion and less beer than the old one; while the presence of the village girls, which is facilitated by the modern custom, must be allowed to add something to its poetic and picturesque side. However, about this modern harvest-home there is little or nothing that is peculiar. The dinner which is eaten, and the amusements which follow the dinner differ in no respect from the dinner and amusements which a millowner might provide for his mechanics. The old racy Sabine humour of the feast has evaporated by exposure to improvement; but the gain perhaps, upon the whole, may be taken to outweigh the loss. The wake or feast, however, where it still flourishes, flourishes externally unchanged, though the worm perhaps is busy at the core. This festival is held in honour of the saint to whom the village church is dedicated; but few traces of its origin survive in the forms of its observance. It is ushered in, indeed, by a more than usually full attendance at church on the first day of the week, but that is owing partly to the influx of visitors and partly from a tradition which still lingers in the country, that going to church is a mark of being at ease and at leisure, and is befitting the season when people get their new clothes and are going to have meat every day. When the church music was in the hands of the village band, the demonstration upon "Feast Sunday" was of the most imposing character. It was preceded by weeks of hard practice, and culminated in a concert of brass instruments and throats "more brazen still than they," which was the admiration of the entire parish. The bass fiddle, the bugle, the bassoon, the trombone, the flageolet, and even the fife were in their full glory, and the only member of the choir who secretly deprecated the performance was the big drum, who felt himself forced to be a kind of profane and irreligious character as he listened on that day to the jubilant bursts of melody in which he was deemed unworthy to join. But his revenge was at hand. By five o'clock on Monday morning, if the time is summer, as soon as it is light in winter, the band musters in the village street, and begins its rounds to the neighbouring villages and farmhouses. In this procession the drum—if we may be allowed the bull—is decidedly first fiddle, as he makes a great deal more noise and gets a larger share of beer than any of the other performers. The band usually returns to the scene of rejoicing towards "dinner time," *i. e.*, between twelve and one, and devotes

the afternoon to playing in front of the principal houses in the village, and on the lawn before the hall, and the parsonage. It is the invariable custom on such occasions to reward them with both drink and money; so that by the time their services are required for the "ball" in the club-room of the public-house, they are in excellent spirits for the occasion. Here "dancing is kept up with great spirit" till two or three o'clock in the morning, the favourite dances being somewhat unrecognizable imitations of country dances and Scotch reels. The second day is a repetition of the first, and then the revelry begins to slacken. The pulse of the big drum becomes feeble and intermittent; vacant spaces may be observed in the row of booths; the children still hang about them, but with downcast looks, as conscious of having fallen greatly in the estimation of the cake woman and the showman, with the disappearance of their last copper. By slow degrees the village falls back into its usual tranquility, and by the end of the week nobody would imagine that the great saturnalia of the year had so recently terminated. The gaieties of the season, however, are not confined to music and dancing. We have mentioned cakes and shows—which are for the children and girls, it being the fashion for the men to affect a kind of superiority to the attractions of the van. These consist of the usual sights on such occasions: monsters with six legs, ladies with pigs' faces, and sometimes a Scriptooral animal, as the unicorn or leviathan, which we have known to be exhibited to the rustics. Occasionally, however, an attempt at a panorama is produced, and even a real play, in which spangled robes, swords, mustachios, and long words quite supersede the necessity for anything in the shape of plot. Waxwork, too, is introduced every now and then; and for the price of one penny the humblest child may make acquaintance with all our most distinguished native murderers.

There was a time—not many years ago—when the Feast was really to English villagers the *no plus ultra* of gaiety and amusement; when their aspirations were bounded by it; and when, indeed, they had no other way of spending any little savings they could effect out of their weekly wages. But the institution of excursion trains has emptied the pockets and opened the minds of the peasantry. They, perhaps, no longer relish the pleasures of the feast so keenly, and having less to spend cannot keep them up so well. The poorest family in the village would consider itself disgraced if there were not a piece of beef in the cupboard throughout the feast week, to be produced to every visitor that came. And how can they contrive this if the money has been spent elsewhere. The girls out at service, too, who come home for their holiday at the Feast, cannot dress as now becomes their station and enjoy the pleasures of society without exhausting the resources once available for home amusement. Of course the time is much further off when the farmers of the parish entered into this festivity. But it is not so long ago but what the present writer can remember it. From twenty-five to thirty years since a few

old farmers still remained who killed the fatted calf and assembled all their friends around them at the village Feast. But this custom began to die out with the grandfathers of the present generation ; and we should almost fear that its grandchildren will live to see the wake improved off the face of the country. In some parts of England already wakes have been extinct for many years, and it is forgotten that they ever flourished.

Next in importance to the village feast is the anniversary of the village club ; and this is the occasion of rejoicing, which it is more especially the clergyman's function to endeavour to improve. The club goes to church in the morning with wands and banners, when a sensible and experienced preacher has an opportunity of making some impression on them. They afterwards dine together at the village inn, with the clergyman at the head of the table and one of the farmers at the bottom. As on these occasions the great men of the village are the guests, and not the entertainers of the people, they occasionally find it somewhat difficult to keep the wit of the company within decorous bounds till such time as they can decently retire. On the whole, however, the men are generally well behaved ; and when we consider that to many of them roast fillets of veal and batter puddings are viands too delicious almost to be realised, which they only taste once a year, and which they are actually paying for with their own money, we may easily forgive them a little boisterousness of animal spirits. The feast, the club, the harvest home, and the "statties" are the four principal events of village life in the eyes of the poor. But Plough-Monday and the Fifth of November are still, in some retired spots, days of considerable importance. Plough-Monday is, as the name imparts, the festival of the ploughmen, and in former times the celebration of it was confined to them. The younger ploughmen in the village, dressed as masquers, went round to all the chief houses of the place, and performed a kind of mystic dance, of which the effect was greatly heightened by a performance on the cow's horn, wielded by the most active of the party, and one dressed in the most fantastic style. Both the dresses, and the dances, and the horn were probably symbolical of something, but of what the present writer knoweth not. However, the men have now become ashamed of joining in this time-honoured ceremony, which has fallen into the hands of children, their seniors contenting themselves with going round quietly in the evening for the usual donation to their supper. On the Fifth of November the old song is still sung, and a pile of faggots still consumed, to commemorate the wickedness of Popery, in a few of our less advanced districts, where the prevailing idea of the Pope would astonish that quiet old gentleman not a little. But the practice is fast dying out ; and we might, add, perhaps, the faster the better. The "statty," as our readers, perhaps, are aware, is an abbreviation of statute fair, or the half-yearly hiring of farm servants, which is still kept up in many places, though the feeling of the day now sets decidedly

against it. On these occasions the young men and women of the neighbourhood all flock together to the appointed centre and stand in the market-place for hire, the particular service which they seek being indicated by some badge. For instance, the youth who aspires to the honourable situation of carter signifies his capabilities by wearing a piece of whipecord in his cap. The votaries of Pan are known by a bunch of wool. The girl who would be housemaid decorates her bonnet with a sprig of broom. And both sexes alike, when they have been hired, pin a knot of gaily coloured ribbons on the breast or shoulders, just as if they were "a-going for soldiers." When the business of the day is over the evening is devoted to rejoicing, and sometimes to dissipation. The servants like this system because it gives them an additional "outing" in the year. The farmers like it because they say they get a "lot to pick from," and can compare the thews and sinews of a great many candidates for service before finally engaging them. We do not mean exactly that they feel them over as they would a horse, or as their wives would thumb a couple of fowls; but they scan them critically as the slave merchant would have scanned a batch of negroes, and naturally regard them in no other light than that of animals. This somewhat degrading system is now gradually disappearing; and as it presents no redeeming features in the eyes of the most enthusiastic Conservative, we trust to hear very shortly that it has entirely vanished from among us.

It is, however, among the class of tenant farmers that the changes which country life has undergone are the most observable; and, just in their present stage, perhaps the least attractive. The farmer has lost a good deal of his ancient simplicity of character, without having acquired more than a very thin coat of that refinement which we hope is one day to replace it. Farmers no longer, as a rule, sit and drink in the village public-house. They no longer come to afternoon Church exhibiting unmistakable signs of having eaten too much dinner. They are no longer entirely illiterate: their wives and daughters have pianos and pony-chaises, and take in magazines. It is now no uncommon thing to hear, when you drop into the village shop of a morning, that Mr. Barleycorn (his father was only farmer Barleycorn) has got a dinner party that evening, a phrase at one time appropriated exclusively to the "quality." On these occasions, we believe, the gentlemen hand the ladies into dinner, just like the real business, and exhibit towards them a frank and facetious gallantry, which would throw into the shade the arts of the most accomplished guardsman. But with all these outer signs of progress the inner man of the farmer has not quite kept pace. His standard of morality is much the same as ever. He is too genteel to take his brandy and water in company with the blacksmith and the carpenter; but he is not above taking a great deal of it in his own parlour. He reads more—a very little more; but it may be doubted whether he thinks more, and whether his views of public questions, of his own position, and of the

relations of the various classes of society towards each other are not quite as narrow as his father's. His newspaper may give him a little more knowledge than he had in other times ; but he has not yet drunk deep enough of the Pierian spring to acquire anything like taste. Consult him on the building of a church, on the selection of a hymn, on the merits of a sermon, and with a little more pretence you will find all the old "Philistinism" crop up. Hear him upon labourers' cottages, or the education of the poor, and you will not find that pianos, and papers, and black coats, and late dinners have made him more liberal than his fore-father who, had a piano been brought into his house, would have smashed it to pieces with the poker ; who dined in his kitchen at one o'clock, had a sausage with his tea at five, supped on bacon at eight, and in summer went to bed by daylight. Among the chief public events which give variety to the farmer's life are the weekly market, the agricultural meeting, and the Visitation. Modern effeminacy has greatly relaxed the severity of the conditions under which markets were attended formerly. Thirty years ago the farmer had to be at market by seven o'clock in the morning, and beast and sheep were, in the winter time, inspected by candlelight. He got out his shambling old gig, or mounted his unclipped cob, by five o'clock, and jogged in steadily at the rate of six miles an hour. Now-a-days he starts from home in his smart dog-cart as late as eleven or twelve o'clock, and often picks up the parson on the road who is walking in about some justice business. At the market dinner, which is usually held at two o'clock, he sits down to a luxurious repast, furnished out with fish, game, and poultry, according to the season, and not unfrequently washed down by copious libations of champagne. Here he settles his engagements for the ensuing week ; gives and receives invitations to shoot, to course, to sup : to come over and look at that cow and have a bit of dinner afterwards ; to drop in and meet Groggins the "Vet," one night, and have a round at loo : and to various other natural and congenial diversions. For farmers, to do them justice, in spite of their complaints against the bad fortune which has placed them in that station of life, will allow, when pressed, that they do "enjoy themselves." Their wives are rather fond of making this admission for them behind their backs, perhaps because upon the whole more of the good things of farming life fall to the man's share than to the woman's. But really a farmer's life at the present day, regarded in the abstract, is one of the most desirable in the world. The class we are now writing about have not taste and feeling to appreciate it properly. But as far as the eating and drinking, riding and driving, hunting and shooting, are concerned, they will, we say, sometimes acknowledge that their lot in life is not contemptible. Their complaints are simply founded on that most diverting of all fallacies, the possibility of having one's cake and eating it. "If I had gone into business in London," said a young farmer to us the other day, "I should have made my fortune." "Yes," we replied, "but do not you perceive that you are now in

the enjoyment of those very things for the sake of which people want to make fortunes—a country-house, a couple of hunters, a good cellar, a nice wife, work which just sufficiently employs without fatiguing you, and a life spent in fresh country air instead of the close atmosphere of towns?" Our friend shook his head, modestly confessing that he was not our equal in argument, but remaining unconvinced as ever. The *sua si bona nōrint* of Virgil seems to be an imperishable truth.

At the agricultural meeting the farmer goes to hear his county member much in the same spirit in which Hannibal listened to the Lecturer. This critical mood, however, extends only to the nature of *wurzels*, the quality of tiles, and the prospects of wool and corn. When politics are introduced, he listens to the orator, not, indeed, with that deferential faith or that keen party spirit which he once possessed, but with curiosity, as he might listen to a traveller who had just returned from foreign countries. In matters of pure politics the farmer of the present day is somewhat of a Gallio. His moral system has never recovered from the shock which it experienced in 1846; and even on questions that more intimately concern himself he exhibits but a languid interest. The malt-tax rouses him to only an ephemeral excitement; he has but little faith in those that promise its repeal, and if he nourishes any strong opinions about anything, they are usually of such a nature that he thinks it better to keep them to himself. He now, accordingly, sits down at the town hall or the new exchange, or the Plantagenet Arms, or wherever the dinner may be held, prepared to hear a political speech as a matter of course, but not caring very much about it. Like the northern farmer and his clergyman, so with the farmer and his member. He supposes he says what he is obliged to say, and he listens and takes his leave.

But probably at no very distant date a different class of men may be returned by the counties from those which have been returned the last fifty years, and a different class of questions springing up may inspire the old blues and yellows with something of their former vitality. The Visitation, however, is the ceremony which after all, perhaps, is the most imposing to the rural mind. A general gathering of churchwardens to pay fees and hear advice is of course concluded with a dinner, at which, in all probability, some very remarkable and striking theories of the episcopal office are occasionally broached. A bishop is a potentate whom the farmer has not fully "reckoned up," to use his own pithy phraseology. It is always understood that he could do a great many things which he doesn't do. In the bucolic conception of him lurk a host of indefinite possibilities, which, though they may not inspire reverence, create a general feeling that he is the sort of person whom it is better to leave alone. Of course we have among the race of farmers both the "thoughtful Whig" and the profane scoffer which are peculiar to no class in society. But we are referring to the farmer in his natural state, unembittered by conflicts with ritualism, and uncorrupted by his dissenting brother-in-law the grocer in the county town. Apart

from such influences as these, the farmer is, on religious questions, like Enceladus before the Gigantomachia—

As tame and mild  
As ox unworried in the grazing meads;

and conceives of a bishop that he is a cross, peculiar to Christianity, between a clergyman and a nobleman, which he doesn't entirely understand, yet hardly cares to investigate. He has heard that his spiritual powers exceed those of an ordinary vicar, but how far he couldn't justly say. He supposes that they couldn't make clergymen without him somehow—not, at least, regular ones; but he doesn't know why. He thinks there must be something dignified in being a successor of the Apostles, and that one who is must be a bigger man than one who isn't. He can't get no further than that, he would perhaps add. But, on the whole, the presence of the prelate, his impressive charge, his lawn sleeves, and in the background, his mysterious attributes, have worked both on his sense and his imagination; and he would rather let the bishops "bide."

Ascending from the farmers to the "clergy and gentry," we find the country life of these last not much altered in its essence. They keep perhaps, rather later hours; more of them drink claret; and not so many clergymen hunt. But all the old institutions of country life still flourish among them, with the exception, perhaps, of the county ball, which has lost much of its pristine glory. But the country dinner party still survives in all its ancient dignity, and has certainly now become one of the most incomprehensible modes of giving and receiving pleasure which mankind have yet invented. A man comes in tired from hunting or shooting, or from working in his parish, at five o'clock; and instead of refreshing himself with all those comforts which no man *can* find out of his own house, he is hurried upstairs to dress, is dragged down shivering to the hall door, and bundled into a damp carriage, to be jostled some eight or ten miles across country, there to swallow salt soup, clammy cutlets, and cheap claret at a neighbour's house, in deference to conventions from which the whole spirit has departed. In former days, when the dinner was at half-past five or six, when the men did really and seriously drink port wine together for a couple of hours, and when a round game and a rubber were permitted to carry on the evening till eleven or twelve o'clock, the arrival of the carriages being preceded by "a tray"—then, indeed, there was some meaning in a country dinner party. People met together to do something which they could not do so well in any other way. The conversation might not be metaphysical, the scandal might not be metropolitan; but the port wine, the whist, and the Pope Joan were sound realities on which people looked back with satisfaction, as on so many more good things got out of life, and stored away beyond the reach of fortune. But the dinner at seven, the coffee after two glasses, tea and photographs at half-past nine, and the carriages at the door at ten—these

things are an unsubstantial pageant. At all events, there is no valid reason for going ten miles on a winter's night to do what you can do equally well without crossing your own threshold. We can do that much in Epirus. As for seeing your friends, that is all hypocrisy. Half the people who meet each other at these parties do not care the least whether they meet or not; and of the other half which does care the majority have easier and pleasanter ways of meeting than this one. No doubt dinner parties in London are often just as unsatisfactory. But then you are not put to the same inconvenience in attending them; while there is always a *chance* of novelty, of meeting some one whom it is really desirable to meet, or of hearing something which it is really a pleasure to hear. We don't mean to say that such treats occur very often; but they are within the region of possibilities, like a woodcock in a day's shooting. Whereas at a country entertainment you know that such an idea is ludicrous. No-country people ought to meet together for what seems natural in the country—real conviviality, and fun and merriment of all sorts. Then the rural dinner party, consisting of two squires, four parsons, a local barrister, and an officer from the nearest barracks, with ladies young and old to match, may make a very jolly evening. But the painful gentility of country banquets as practised at the present day is a total mistake. It is out of place, and suited to conditions of life which prevail only in cities. Probably the farmer's "dinner party" is, in spirit at least, nearer to what a country party ought to be than the respectable assemblage which looks down upon it from the neighbouring Hall.

There is a certain amount of tolerably pleasant visiting still kept up among people who do not aspire to give dinners. But this can only be developed under exceptionally favourable circumstances. In a large village of twelve or fifteen hundred people there may happen to be several houses tenanted by families who belong to the condition of gentry, but are not rich enough for county hospitalities. Or sometimes in some favoured district will have accumulated, apparently by accident, a little cluster of such establishments, a mile or two distant from each other, and admitting of easy pedestrian communication. There the ladies of the families go and lunch or drink tea with each other, and the men can make up card-parties without taking thought beforehand. But such exceptions are few and far between, and must of necessity continue so.

What market is to the farmer, the "Bench" is to the squire. There he not only transacts business, but hears the news and makes up his social engagements. But, after all, the country life of a country gentleman has changed so little during the last thirty years, that we have no power of adding much to what has been of late so copiously written on the subject. The closer intercourse between town and country, of which we have already spoken, would of course affect the upper stratum of country society first; and at the present day it is not too much to say that the distinction which once existed between town gentleman and country gentleman

has totally disappeared, as far, at least, as manners and habits are concerned. Differences of another kind, however, are still to be observed between the country gentleman who lives wholly in the country, and the country gentleman who spends the season in town. The country clergy, perhaps, retain more of their earlier peculiarities ; but that is owing simply to the fact that they are a much more mixed class, consisting of men who are on a level with the highest aristocracy, down to men whose tastes and practices are akin to those of farmers and tradesmen. The clergyman's life, however, is now a much more active one than it used to be. Even the most sluggish divine is now more or less goaded on by a certain *esprit de corps* to do something to make the Church popular. Clerical meetings of all sorts now-a-days generally contain a sufficient proportion of energetic and cultivated men to put laziness and ignorance to shame. The clergyman's school is a necessity which he cannot evade even if he would. A very disorderly parish will give him more annoyance than the exertion required to amend it. He must pay rather more attention to his sermons : while if we quit these rudimentary and indispensable branches of labour, we find custom sanctioning a variety of extra good works, which to the clergyman of a bygone generation would have been simply unintelligible. However, we are now bordering upon ground where we feel that we have no business. And the only recent innovation in clerical country life to which we shall devote a few words is that of penny readings, which have become so fashionable that we may almost exclaim with Juvenal,

De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule.

The anxiety of country people to promote this species of entertainment contrasts oddly enough with the difficulty which they experience in finding suitable materials. An audience of town working men, however superficially educated, have minds more on the alert than their agricultural brethren, and more capable of grasping any clue which is afforded them towards understanding subjects with which they were previously unacquainted. The ordinary talk of town life, even among quite the lower orders, is a species of education in itself ; and their habits are so much more gregarious that the play of mind is more active, and keeps their faculties so much the further from stagnation. But with audiences of which so large a part consists of peasantry, for whose sake the penny reading is chiefly carried on, the difficulty is immense. They dislike and resent anything which they consider childish ; they cannot understand anything which approaches the argumentative ; their imaginations are too inert to enter with much interest into the higher kinds of poetry and fiction. The English peasant is a shrewd, observant fellow, very often ; and his remarks upon life in general would often shame the philosophers of cities. But the literary faculty is as yet wholly undeveloped in him. And penny readers are sometimes driven by despair to plunge into the wildest extremes in the forlorn hope of a success. We were lately staying with a clerical friend

who was with difficulty dissuaded from reading to his flock a portion of a translation of *Tacitus* which he had recently completed. And we have heard more than once of Tennyson's *Vision of Sin* being selected for a similar purpose. However, whether the particular reading chosen be understood of the people or not, the effect perhaps is equally good. The poor unquestionably like the system. And as the clergyman or the ambitious young farmer walks up to his desk at the end of the ill-lighted school-room, you see a crowd of interested faces rising above a tier of smock-frocks, or shining out of village bonnets, which might elsewhere have been glowing with some less innocent excitement. The public house is thinned at all events of its votaries of both sexes. And when Miss Flamborough plays them a lively piece on the harmonium, which they presume to be "out of her own head," as it is neither a psalm nor a hymn, their satisfaction verges on enthusiasm. As we desire above all things to be truthful, we would have our readers to understand that our own personal experience of penny readings has been limited; that we have described them partially from an *à priori* point of view; and that on some occasions when our host has left his dessert to take his place at the village rostrum, we have been guilty of remaining behind in company with the port and filberts. We have always ourselves steadily declined to trifle with the dignity of literature, and to read anything for a penny.

The allusion in the last paragraph to the thinning of the public-houses brings us at last to that topic which no essayist upon country-life could be pardoned for evading; need we say we mean the festive cup? It may be said very truly now that "people don't drink;" just, as it once used to be said, "the Guards don't dance." But if any one imagines that a general national reformation has yet taken place in this respect, we can tell him he is very much mistaken. Drinking has subsided, but it is not yet nearly submerged. Wine and spirits still keep their heads above water in many a snug corner of Great Britain. We will say this much, indeed, of the better specimens of the peasantry, that they are beginning to see the folly and wickedness of gross intoxication. But the old tradition, according to which "something to drink" expresses the highest conception of pleasure to which the rustic imagination is capable of soaring, is still in full force. "What should you do, James, if you suddenly had a large sum of money left you?" said a lady of our acquaintance to her gardener, a most respectable married man, a labourer in the village. "I dun no, miss," was the answer; "but I think I should have summut to drink." In a very different part of England we know another most respectable character who is sometimes engaged to go out with shooting-parties, and who, exhibiting on his return from one such expedition a moody and dissatisfied cast of countenance was questioned as to the reason of it. "When I goes out a shootin' I likes a skinful," was the forcible and ingenuous answer. Now this man was no drunkard; he had no extra work to do on such occasions.

His chief occupation was lying down under a hedge and pretending to mark. But an enormous quantity of beer was in his eyes the coping-stone of all human undertakings, and therefore the legitimate object of a man who wished to see everything done as well as possible, and who conceived that shooting without much malt was a crude and imperfect form of art. We were visiting the other day—in rather a retired neighbourhood, it must be confessed—where it is still recorded with pride that a farmer, lately dead, used to drink twenty-six glasses of gin-and-water every Saturday night, in this wise : he wore a long single-breasted waistcoat with thirteen buttons, and for every glass that he drank, he undid one ; when he got to the bottom he buttoned it up again upon the same principle, after which process he was, doubtless, as a London jester, when he heard the story, observed, "tight in both senses of the word." A clergyman to whom we lately described by what a curious train of circumstances a lost post-office order for six shillings had recently found its way back to us, observed, after a few minutes reflection, that there was "a sight o' beer in six shillings, mind yer." These anecdotes are but straws ; but they show this, that with the humours of country-life Bacchus is still mingled, and that even among the higher classes

The prints of his departing steps appear.

It is, however, in the habits of mind by which the citizen and the villager are distinguished from each other, that the least changeable phenomena of country life are to be sought. Among these are one or two which descend from quite the dark ages. The rustic still retains an inveterate suspicion of people who live in towns. A village carpenter thinks that all town carpenters use bad wood, and flimsy materials in general. He is fond of saying that town work "won't stan' to it like country work." A farmer is under the impression that you must be very sharp to avoid being cheated if you dine at a coffee-house in London. The waiters, he has heard, will always ask monstrous sums for attendance, if they have reason to think you know no better. If he asks his way in the streets, he is very much inclined to treat the answers he receives with the kind of cunning recommended by Meg Merrilies to Dandie Dinmont, and to take the turning he is *not* told ; a Puck-like tendency to mislead strangers being, as he understands, very general among "London chaps." These ideas are derived from a time when "cocknies" and "clodhoppers" formed really two hostile social armies, and never lost an opportunity of annoying or ridiculing each other. But we must say for Londoners now that they have quite worn out this ancient prejudice, and its retention by country people is one of the silliest surviving oddities which still betray them.

Another peculiarity of the *bonâ fide* moral temperament—the temperament of men who are not merely in the country, but of it—is that easy-going *laissez faire* view of life and life's business which approaches

very closely to the quietude of perfect good-breeding. Your true countryman's creed is very like the late Lord Melbourne's,—that if you will only let things alone, they are sure to take care of themselves. He is not fond of fixed appointments, or much letter-writing. The first are encroachments upon liberty; and the second leads to the first. If he has business to settle, or amusements to arrange with a neighbour, he waits till he meets him accidentally. He doesn't consider that any one can ever be engaged. The idea of giving you notice long beforehand if he wants you at a particular time, never enters his head. If you *are* engaged, so much the worse for both; but to have prevented the misfortune was not worth the trouble it would have cost. He is of opinion that if anything important happens you are sure to hear of it without his writing to inform you, though he may be the very person on whom you rely for information. Such a man is generally good-humoured and agreeable, and possesses much of that repose which is erroneously imagined to be peculiar to the Vere de Veres. But he is often singularly provoking; and not the less so that he opposes a kind of passive surprise to your reproaches which drives an irritable man mad. One cannot help feeling, at the same time, that in this peculiar frame of mind there is something to be admired; and much that is natural and even generous. It is due to causes of which it is difficult to conceive that the effects were not foreseen, and consequently approved of. The very succession of the seasons and the operations of Nature are perpetually teaching the countryman to see the certainty which underlies variation, and to have confidence in the right result, however unseasonable the sky. Spring is sure to come. It doesn't very much matter whether it is this week or next. The corn is sure to grow—not so good perhaps this year as last, but then next year will redress the balance. And so, generally speaking, it does. Thus there is far less *speculation* in the business of a labourer, a farmer, or a squire, than in that of a merchant. They are obliged to leave a great deal in the hands of Nature; and in the long run she is a faithful stewardess. It is thus that they acquire the habit of leaving things alone a good deal, and of supposing that some occult social force will propagate news, arrange interviews, and settle disputes, as Nature makes the trees to bud, the birds to pair, and the streams to thaw.

It is likewise to be remembered that in purely country occupations there are few things to be done to-day which cannot equally well be done to-morrow. The farmer wants to get his wheat in—he ought to lose no time about it, that is certain. But after all it makes no great difference whether he begins it on a Tuesday or a Wednesday. His harvest is gathered sometimes at one time and sometimes at another. He has no contracts to fulfill: he has no bills to meet (they are not of the essence of his business, that is); if he is an ordinarily prosperous man in his calling he need never have an hours' anxiety about business in the course of the

whole year, comparable to what the City man experiences probably at least once a month. The natural result of this is that the countryman *par excellence* doesn't understand bustle. He disbelieves in the necessity for haste. He has, like Dr. Johnson, who ought to have known better, a contempt for men who are always "obliged to go at a certain hour," and has a secret idea that they only do so in order to magnify their own importance. In a word, he is the very opposite of what the Americans mean by "smart." But the defect, if it be a real defect, is a very amiable and a very aristocratic fault, and it has this one great merit—that if it often provokes, it is certain never to disgust, one.

The difference between town and country life as it affects ladies is perhaps as striking as in any of its other aspects. The contrast between a lady in the London season, surrounded by London influences, in the full swing of town gaiety, and the same fair being in her flower garden, her poultry yard, or perhaps her farm, a hundred miles away from the capital, cannot fail to have impressed every careful observer of modern manners. The lady farmer, indeed, who will discuss the last new poem or novel, the last opera or the last heresy with you one moment, and will be equally animated the next upon the composition of manure and the breed of pigs, is a product perhaps peculiar to Great Britain. The combination is one that we rather like. It imparts a pleasant kind of freedom to conversation, and has the invaluable property of making every body feel quite at home. To ladies who do not care much about the pursuits of country life, country life is naturally dull. A very great lady who can always have a houseful of guests, may turn country into town, all but the shopping, just as well as night into day. But ladies of smaller incomes who have no taste for the sweet and homely pleasures of the country, to whom domestic pets are a bore, and whose sole thought after a picnic, an archery, or a dinner party, is how to kill time till the next one; of such we say the sooner they exchange into town the better. But commend us to those members of the fair sex who are English enough to enjoy both; who bring to moral amusements and occupation all the refinement of the town, and carry into the pleasures of the town the simplicity and freshness of the country. There is something peculiarly piquant in the spectacle of a London beauty going round the farmyard, looking at the new calf, or searching for the strayed hen's nest, attended by dogs great and small, and looking happier than she ever did in St. James's. It is like seeing the Archbishop of Canterbury drink a pint of porter. Far be it from us to fall into the vulgar error of attributing any higher degree of happiness or innocence to the country, or to suggest that its inhabitants enjoy, by virtue of merely being in it, any immunity from care. But the *contrast* is as we have given it; and it is a feature of moral life on which Englishmen may justly congratulate themselves.

There is, in conclusion, this much to be said of the careless, happy-

go-lucky style of life which either does prevail or seems to prevail in so many country houses: it affords an invaluable distraction for the town man. Consider the relief which he experiences to whom for the last six months every hour in the day has brought its appointed task, every day in the week its appointed liability, when he wakes up and finds himself a resident in the happy valley,

Where come not posts, nor proofs, nor any bills  
Nor ever dun knocks loudly.

(We beg Mr. Tennyson's pardon.) Consider this, we say, and then tell us whether even what have been thought the shortcomings of the bucolic life do not play a most useful and honourable part in the economy of society. Going down into the country after a long spell of London work, is like going to dinner after a single day's work. Care is thrown aside. The busy man associates with idlers, and for the time being is one of them. "If it were not," says De Quincey, "for the modern institution of dinner, the modern brain-working man must inevitably go mad." And what dinner is to one day, country life is to the whole year. Alas! it is over for the present with most of us. "We cannot dine again till to-morrow," as Guloseton says in *Pelham*. It is a painful thought—but we can at all events go to bed and dream about a Country Life.

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## Some Chapters on Talk.

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### I.—OF THE DESCRIPTIVE TALKER.

TALK is a necessity of civilized life—so much may be safely assumed to start with. And by the “Talk” here spoken of is not meant merely that bare utterance of intelligible sounds which is required for the expression of our wants, but rather that peculiar use of speech by means of which we convey one to another, either information of various kinds which we desire to impart, or opinions upon various subjects which we wish to communicate, and which use of speech is commonly called conversation. To define speech as a power of uttering certain articulate sounds, by means of which we are able to make known our urgent wants, or our irrepressible ideas, to those who hear them, is to adopt a merely savage view of this great gift. Persons imbued with such convictions meeting at a feast would not have much to say to each other. Their wants they would make known to the servants; while as to ideas, it is certain that some of us go into the world but poorly endowed with them. Our civilized creed with regard to the use of speech is widely different from that first, bare, crude conception which assigns to it a merely utilitarian limit. I hold that there are certain occasions, by no means of unfrequent recurrence, when talking must be engaged in for talking’s sake. I hold that there arrive continually, during the course of ordinary nineteenth-century life, seasons when various persons, more or less known to each other, meet together for the purpose of celebrating certain social rites and ceremonies, and when, if the ceremonies in question are to be successfully conducted, it is absolutely necessary that the celebrants should engage in what is sometimes called conversation, but more frequently and more familiarly “Talk.”

Of the importance of this element in our social life it is hardly possible to speak too highly. Which of those rites and ceremonies mentioned above—what dinner, what wedding-breakfast, what garden-party, what picnic, what evening assembly—can be got through without its aid? Has the reader, who is in the habit of attending such social gatherings, ever observed how entirely these entertainments are spoiled by any tendency to taciturnity on the part of the assembled company? What a dreadful thing is a dinner-party when the guests will not talk. The feelings of the host, or hostess, who presides on such an occasion, and who is responsible for the success or failure of the entertainment, are really pitiable; and the glance of gratitude with which he or she rewards the person who will start a remark which seems likely to have conversational consequences is almost pathetic.

This talk, then, being a thing of such prodigious value, and so much of our happiness, as members of a social system, depending upon our proficiency in it, it seems wonderful that so little has hitherto been written upon the subject, and that as an art capable of cultivation, and having certain fixed principles, to be got at by means of diligent study, it has not been treated of at all. It is under this last-mentioned phase that it is proposed now to consider this subject. There are many persons who, though fully convinced that a certain amount of conversational readiness is indispensable to any man who intends to set up in business socially, are yet at the same time painfully conscious of their own inability to start a conversation, or having started it, to keep it going. To such persons a course of study, having for its object the attainment of a certain amount of conversational prowess, may be of essential service, and although there is no doubt that, to a certain extent, the talker, like the poet, is born, not made, and has the garrulous element specially developed in his nature from the very beginning, yet is it not too much to suppose that, by well-directed labour, even those, who are not gifted conversationally by nature, may be able greatly to improve themselves, and may learn, if not to be brilliant talkers, at least to have enough to say for themselves to enable them to pass muster in general society.

And now, what shall be our first act in pursuance of this determination to master, as far as may be, this great art of conversation? Our first proceeding must be to examine minutely and carefully, as all conscientious and laborious students should do, the performances of the masters, of those great men, that is to say, who may certainly be regarded as excelling in this art which we propose to cultivate. The great talkers—let us inquire—what is their manner of proceeding? What methods do they favour? What, in a word, do they talk about?

After a prolonged and elaborate consideration of this subject, I have arrived at the conclusion that your great talker will, in his ordinary practice, generally have recourse to one of four expedients. He will either describe experiences, his own or another's; or he will entertain his company with small gossip and scandal; or else he will express opinions which are sometimes original, and sometimes borrowed; or he will be—and this is the commonest phase of all—a professed *raconteur*, and teller of anecdotes. These are the four principal phases under which the phenomenon which we are considering is ordinarily exhibited. There are others of minor importance, which may perhaps be found deserving of after consideration, but these are the principal; let us deal with them in order, and with a gravity becoming the importance of our subject. And first with the conversationalist, who is great as a describer.

This particular talker—the man who describes—has perhaps, speaking in mercantile fashion, a larger stock-in-trade to depend upon than any other. There is positively no limit to his resources. New subject-matter for treatment is furnished by every act of his life. Has he just returned from a journey to the Pyramids, or has he newly come from a flower-show

at the Horticultural Gardens, it is all the same. He has passed through an experience, and he will describe it.

"Where do you think I've been all the afternoon?" he will ask, selecting a suitable moment for his question, and addressing his hostess, or some person who occupies a good central position at the dinner-table before which he is seated. "I have been 'doing' the athletic sports down at Stoke Pogis. Two of my nephews are at the school there, you know—very good school I'm told, two hundred boys, almost like a public school, only the boys get better looked after. Well, these young rascals my nephews must needs send me an invitation to their annual athletic sports, or whatever they call 'em, and as I had nothing particular to do I went down—drove down with Mrs. Talboys, who's got a son there—an uncommon fine boy he is, carried away half the prizes." The conversationalist will break off here. Mrs. Talboys is seated at table. "She'll tell you all about it," says this great master. The lady declines, however: "You will describe it better than I can," she says. "Oh, there's nothing to describe," the professor continues, depreciating his own art; "there were the usual things, as I'm told. I never saw anything of the kind before, but I'm told it's always the same. Running, you know, and high jumps, and long jumps, and water-jumps—water the colour of peas-soup—and racing in sacks, and all the rest of it." And so once fairly started, and with a good audience, comprising at least all the guests at his own end of the table, our talker goes off into a long and brilliant account of the Stoke Pogis athletics, describing the "little men in their straw hats, you know, and with their bright-coloured scarves and ribbons, and their eager little faces, and taking jumps as high as themselves;" and it is ten to one that he will give one particular instance of a "youngster," somewhat older than most of the others, who was evidently very much smitten with an uncommonly pretty girl who was there with some members of the young fellow's family. The professor will narrate how he had his eye on this youngster, who had a most resolute expression of countenance, and who was evidently determined to win the great stake of the day—"silver-gilt cup, really a handsome thing"—in order that he might appear to advantage in the eyes of the beloved object. "I kept my eye upon the lad," our talker goes on, "and I do assure you I was never, in the whole course of my life, more powerfully interested. It was a long race—longest of the day. The starting point was exactly where I place this salt-cellar; the course went round in this fashion, and the winning-post was here, where I will put Miss Flickster's fan, if she will allow me. The position of the beloved object is indicated by this piece of roll—I'm sorry I've nothing better to represent her with—I don't know what my young friend would say; but at any rate there she stood." Then he goes on to describe the race; how the "young fellow" was at first rather behind than otherwise, how he gradually drew on, and managed, by the time that half the distance was done, to get into a better place; how at last he distanced all except a single competitor; how these

two ran, neck and neck, till they came to the piece of rising ground where the young lady, represented by the roll, was stationed ; how the youngster cast one glance at her as he flew past, and how he seemed, in that moment of time, to receive a new impetus, snatching the race away from his rival, at the very last moment, and to the bewilderment and rapture of all beholders.

Our conversationalist does not stop here. He finds that he is making a good thing out of the Stoke Pogis athletics, and he wisely determines to get all he can out of them. He describes the racing in sacks, the "putting" the stone, the throwing the cricket-ball, and, at last, the great water-jump. "The best fun of all, I do assure you. Half the young fellows fell in, and got thoroughly drenched. I was standing close to the water, and so were you, by-the-by, Mrs. Talboys. And didn't you get most horribly splashed ?"

Here, then, is a specimen of the art of talking, as practised by the descriptive talker. There is much to be learned from him. He furnishes us with an example of courage and of perseverance. Courage it certainly requires to commence such an undertaking as this which we have just seen him through, and perseverance to carry that undertaking on, when interrupted, as a man continually must be, in making so long a statement at a dinner-table, by the handing of dishes, the pouring out of wines, and the desperate attempts of certain envious gentlemen amongst the audience to break the thread of his narrative. I would particularly direct the attention of all talk-students to these indications of the nerve and energy possessed by our friend, also to the very able manner in which he contrives to bring certain members of the company into his story, and to his skilful management of parenthesis.

Nor let it be for a moment supposed that this artist only excels in the treatment of subjects of this almost trifling description. He is quite as strong in the impressive line, and in treating the serious and poetical as in dealing with this sort of light comedy of "Athletic Sports." He can—alas ! say some people—describe anything and everything. His choice of subject depends entirely upon the nature of the experiences which he has most recently gone through. Whether he has been in Norway, salmon-fishing, or hunting lions in South Africa, he is sure to return as full of matter as we have seen him to be after the Stoke Pogis entertainment. He is a man whose peculiar talent is differently regarded by his different listeners. He affords entertainment to some few who are easily amused ; he furnishes an excuse for silence to other few who are too stupid, or too idle, to talk ; and he drives the members of that small class who are easily bored to the confines of desperation. This, indeed, is the worst part of the descriptive talker : the risk of his becoming a bore is so exceedingly imminent. Descriptions, by word of mouth, of scenery, of an Alpine sunset, of a journey across the desert, of a naval review, of gun experiments at Shoeburyness, of a chamois-hunt, of a match at Lord's, or even, as we have seen, of athletic sports at Stoke Pogis, are so dreadfully apt to

lead to the boring of those to whom they are addressed that we get at last to feel alarmed when the first warning notes of the describer's voice begin to make themselves heard, when the sunset reminds him of "an evening scene—which, indeed, he will never forget—on the Lake of Como," or when the shape taken by the coals in the fire recall to him the profile of a guide he once had in Calabria—"the merriest, heartiest fellow you ever saw."

Still, in spite of all, this man is generally well received. His talk, at any rate, is incessant in its flow; and he may be depended upon to go on with it for any length of time. So that, upon the whole, he is welcome in most societies, and is much asked out to dinner.

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## II.—OF THE TALKER WHO RETAILS GOSSIP.

This is a talker of a very exalted quality indeed. For the perfect development of this species, moral and mental qualifications of an elevated order are imperatively needed. The retailer of small gossip must be possessed of a fine memory, and he should also be exceedingly diligent and industrious. Consider, in proof of his diligence, how hard and how continuously he has to work. He is for ever on the move. There is scarcely such a thing as a friendly gathering of any kind, or an unfriendly one either, from which he may safely be absent. Wherever men and women assemble together with any social object in view, there he is obliged to be on duty. He must frequent flower-shows, garden-parties, exhibitions, musical entertainments, balls, and evening-parties. He must haunt clubs, and hang about ladies' drawing-rooms. Nor is the large amount of bodily activity, which is necessary that he may be thus ubiquitous, all. It is needful, wherever he is, that he should have all his mental faculties about him, that he should constantly be listening with all his ears, and watching with all his eyes, lest something important should escape him. He has a reputation to keep up, and keep it up he must at any cost. He is supposed to know everything. Is some love-affair attracting the attention of that small section of the world which calls itself society? He must know all the ins and outs of that love-affair, be acquainted with the exact nature of the settlements, and the views of the parents on both sides; in fact, he must be thoroughly up in all the particulars connected with it from beginning to end, must know what the lovers said to each other when they were under the trees in Richmond Park, and what it was that they quarrelled about at the Woolwich ball.

Or is it some less romantic subject with which society is busying itself? Does it want to know the particulars of that break-up of the Guildersquash establishment which is exciting so much attention? How much money has the house failed for? was there anything settled on Mrs. Guildersquash? what do they mean to do next? On all these points

our friend must be informed, and well informed. He must be in a position to state with precision what men, who knew about money, were saying on this subject a fortnight ago, a month ago, six months ago—what was said, if you come to that, from the moment when Guildersquash made that magnificent present of diamonds to Mrs. G. The financial men at the clubs were talking even then, and none of them were taken by surprise when the failure took place.

This retailer of small gossip is a restless personage. He prowls about a room, working his way from one group of talkers to another, generally setting them right with his facts. "Oh, don't you know how she got him?" he says, coming upon a small colony of gossips, who are speculating on the recent matrimonial capture of a wary gentleman of their acquaintance. "I happen to know all about it. She was determined to carry her point, and finding our friend rather backward in coming forward, she fell dangerously ill, pretended to be dying, and did it all so well that she actually managed to take in the doctor, and got him to pronounce her *in extremis*. Of course the family sent for Sir John, told him that the girl was in love with him, and entreated him, as a kind of melancholy satisfaction, to consent to a death-bed union. What could he do? Of course he consented, when lo, and behold! from that moment my young lady begins to pick up, and in a fortnight is as well as you or I." Our gossipmonger will sometimes make an effective exit at the conclusion of an anecdote of this sort, or perhaps will only bustle away and join another set of talkers, for whom he has got something else ready in his budget. In this case it is the latest intelligence concerning a certain matrimonial squabble of a highly interesting nature. "You've heard of the row up at the Dovecot," he begins this time. "Oh, a most serious business, I can tell you. Began in her getting hold of a note-book—note-book of her husband's—in which she found some entries of a most compromising kind. What were they? Well, I'm just going to tell you. Turning over the leaves,—jealous, inquisitive woman, as you know,—she reads to her horror, 'Great sweetness of character in Laura—noble girl—she consents—meeting at the witch elm, midnight.' Well, you may conceive what a row there was. My lady seals up the book, encloses it in a letter to her husband, who happens to be absent, and rushes off to her father's house in a condition more easily conceived than described. Husband returns, reads her letter, rushes after her, and an explanation ensues. What do you think it was? Notes—notes for a tale he was writing. He thinks he has a gift for novel-writing, as you know, and these were some memoranda which he had made for his plot, or whatever you call it." It is ten to one that our gossip concludes a story of this kind with the words: "Fact, I assure you;" or, "That's a fact, I pledge you my honour." He is in truth a man much given to the use of little set forms of speech—is fond of such phrases as "Lo, and behold!" and will gladly speak of certain situations as "more easily imagined than described."

The field of our friend's operations, it must be admitted, is a very extensive one. Matrimonial squabbles, pecuniary disasters, and anecdotes of lovers, are by no means the only wares that he deals in. Nothing is too great or too small for him. When, on the occasion of Mrs. Buskinsock's private theatricals, the part of Rosalind, which was to have been enacted by Miss Freshfield—her first season out—was suddenly transferred to the Honourable Eva Brownwigge, who but our gifted friend was in a position to enlighten the world as to how that change in Mrs. Buskinsock's arrangements came to be effected? "It was at one of the final rehearsals," he happens to know, "that the thing was done. Our dear Brownwigge," says Gossip, "was present, and at the end of the third act of the play—this happened, mind, in the hearing of a friend of mine—she called Mrs. Buskinsock aside, and told her, in so many words, that the bold way in which Miss Freshfield acted the part was the most shocking—that was the very word she used—the most shocking thing she had ever seen, and that, unless *some other arrangement* were made, she (Brownwigge) firmly believed that all Mrs. Buskinsock's guests would walk out of the room on the night of performance. 'But what am I to do?' says Mrs. B. 'The invitations are all out for the day after to-morrow. If Miss Freshfield doesn't perform the part, who will?' 'I will,' says Brownwigge; 'and I would do a great deal more rather than see disgrace brought upon you by such a performance as that taking place under your roof. Why, I would do it,' she added, 'even for the sake of the poor girl herself; and she will live to thank me one day for having stepped in to her rescue.' And she did it," adds our gossipmonger. "She always intended to do it—had got the words by heart long before she made her great move at this final rehearsal. As for Mrs. Buskinsock, she is so afraid of Brownwigge, on account of her influence with her relations the Delacrêmes, that if the old girl had proposed to act the part of Rosalind in top-boots, I believe poor Mrs. B. would have let her."

The reader is now in a condition to understand of what varied elements the conversation of this particular talker is made up. And let no one suppose that it is possible to get together all the information of *different kinds* which is required to set up a conversationalist of this sort in business without much and continuous labour. There is something almost respectable in the diligence with which an efficient gossipmonger pursues his studies. He has a reputation to keep up. "Here comes So-and-so," his friends say; "he will tell us all about it." What if he can't tell them all about it? He is simply ruined. And so for the sake of this reputation of excessive knowingness, he is ready to work, ready to sacrifice his ease and comfort, ready to encounter—and this is the worst part of it all—every kind of rebuff and humiliation which it is in the power of society to inflict. Of these, indeed, he cannot choose but meet with a very large allowance. His profession that he has taken up requires that he should be everywhere, and there are some houses which are included under that denomination "everywhere" to which it is not always easy to get an

entrance. To those very theatricals of Mrs. Buskinsock's of which we have heard Gossip talking so lightly, he only gained admission by dint of the most incessant exertion, and the most unwearying perseverance, by morning calls, by assiduous attentions to Mrs. B. whenever he met her, by looking after her carriage, by plying her at evening-parties with choice refreshments, by boasting continually of his influence with the great and powerful. Between the time of his first hearing that those theatricals were to be, and the moment when at last his machinations were crowned with success, and the long-wished-for invitation arrived, this little man lived a life of real misery, and it was observed by his friends that he was getting thinner every day.

"Set a thief to catch a thief." This is the man of all others, if the reader will believe it, who is the most pitilessly severe upon those persons who have recourse to any of the small intrigues and stratagems which some people practise when endeavouring, as the phrase goes, to "get on in society." He has no mercy on people of this sort, and some of his most favourite and best-received anecdotes are based upon the proceedings of that particular class whose war-cry as they enter the social battle-field is *Parvenir!* "You don't know how she gets such invitations as *do* come in her way," he says, speaking of a certain lady whose path through social life is not an easy one. "You think it is owing to her having a French cook and a fine house furnished by Gillow. Nothing of the sort. I'll tell you all about it, for I happen to know. When that woman was in Paris"—it is generally observed that about this time our Gossip's audience closes round him very attentively—"When that woman was in Paris, she had the luck to get hold of a chiropodist, a *pedicure*, or whatever you call it—in plain English a corn-doctor—who sold her, I believe at an enormous price, a recipe for destroying corns. One or two people, afflicted with excrescences of this nature, found it out, made it known that my lady was in possession of the secret, and tried to get it from her. She was far too cunning, however, to let it out for nothing, and it was very soon discovered that the only way to get the Frenchman's recipe from her was to ask her to dinner. Fact, I assure you," says Gossip, in conclusion; "and you may feel quite sure, whenever you meet the lady in question at any house, that some one at least of its inhabitants is troubled with corns."

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### III.—OF THE TALKER WHO RELATES ANECDOTES.

ALL talkers must be possessed of a certain amount of moral courage, but the teller of stories needs more of this quality than the rest. When a man has once commenced a story he is in for it. He must—positively must—go on till it is finished. Now, this is not so much the case with other talkers. The narrator of experiences can cut his statement short if he finds that it is not relished by those who are listening to it; the discusser of topics can drop his subject at a moment's notice, if it should

become desirable to do so ; but the story-teller once embarked must go on, and finish his anecdote, even if his audience show obvious signs of disgust, or if—which is still worse—he himself has lost all confidence in the virtues of his own narrative. Among the many qualifications absolutely indispensable to the anecdotist this of courage—some will call it brass—is the most indispensable. There are not wanting others. The story-teller should be middle-aged. The writer of these chapters has never come across a young man who could tell a story even tolerably. When a young man attempts to tell a story, he is always, to begin with, in too great a hurry. He always seems conscious that his audience mistrusts him, and so he rattles on at a prodigious pace, in order that he may get to the point, and show you that it really is not such a bad story as you suppose. Or, if he does not fall into the error of hurrying his narrative, he is sure to be betrayed into another which is worse, and to become prolix and long-winded. He takes his time, refusing to be hurried, but restraining himself by a violent and obvious effort, of which every one is conscious. He can't do it. It is against nature. There are a great many things which a young man can do, and of which his elders are incapable. He can waltz without altogether losing his breath ; he can wear a waist-coat the circumference of which is larger round the chest than round the waist ; he can eat lobster-salad for supper, and wash it down with champagne. All these things, and many more, he can do ; but tell a story he cannot, though his life should depend upon it. The story-teller, then, should be middle-aged—forty is too young—and he should be prosperous.

In saying that the story-teller should be prosperous, it is not meant, in this case, that he should be rich—though there is no harm in that, far from it. It is merely meant, here, to proclaim that he should be a man whom people know something about, a man who has succeeded in his undertakings, whatever they may have been. A lawyer in good practice, or a popular preacher, or a well-known artist, will do. A nobody will not do. When a stout capitalist, hearing our story-teller for the first time, turns to his neighbour, and asks, "Who is it?" it is necessary that the neighbour shall be able to make a satisfactory reply, or maybe the capitalist will not like the story. A teller of anecdotes, perhaps more than any other kind of talker, requires to be backed up—to be backed up by a sense of position, a conviction that he is somebody. This is one thing which is indispensable to him, and there is another which, if he is to be very successful, is equally so—the knowledge that his audience is disposed to be friendly. This last certainty—unless the story-teller is a very old hand indeed, and made of very tough material—is indeed most important. The feeling that there is an enemy in the camp, a sneering, unbelieving listener present, is mighty discouraging. The career of a habitual story-teller is of course full of vicissitude. He has his days of triumph and his days of comparative failure. The day to be marked with a white stone is the day when he finds himself among persons who know all about him, who are friendly disposed, and to whom

the story which he is about to relate *is not already known*. All proud distinctions have their drawbacks, and one of the worst drawbacks which the professed *raconteur* has to encounter is the probable presence, in almost every company which he addresses, of some one or more individuals to whom the story which he is committed to tell is not entirely new. It is disconcerting to an anecdotist to be conscious that such persons are among his audience, and he will sometimes try to disarm them by a prefatory word : "I am afraid, Staleybridge, that you've heard this before ;" or, "I'm sorry for you, Macstinger, you must bear the infliction as well as you can."

And this consideration of the importance to the story-teller of freshness on the part of his audience, brings us to another qualification for this office which must not be overlooked. It is desirable—not indispensable, but certainly, on the whole, desirable—that the anecdotist should be a single man. The wife of a professed story-teller must be subject to many sorrows. It must be wearisome for her, for instance, to hear the same story twenty times, as it is related to twenty different audiences. However well and affectionately disposed she may be, she must surely quail a little when she hears the preliminary strains, the first few words, "I was once staying at a little inn in North Wales ;" or, "My little boy was out with his nurse the other day." How she must suffer too when the story does not go well ; when the audience is not sympathetic ; when the story-teller is not in cue ; or when, as will sometimes happen, he omits some important element in his narrative. I have seen a wife prompt her husband under such circumstances,— " You have forgotten, George, about the little boy and the pump ;" or, reproachfully, " You've left out about the frying-pan,"—but it does not answer. If a man once begins to go wrong in telling a story, it is all up with him ; he is best let alone. The flounderings of a story-teller who has got into difficulties are beyond measure painful to witness. It is so easy for him to get into trouble. There are so many pitfalls and snares in his way. He may, as has been said above, perceive among his listeners one or more to whom his story is already known ; or, he may lose faith in his own narrative, and may feel as the crisis draws near that it is weak and will not give general satisfaction ; or, still worse, from having begun to narrate without having sufficient social standing to secure him listeners, or from some other cause, he may get to be deserted by his audience as he goes on. This is a terrible situation. A man in such a case will try different listeners one after another. He will generally fly high at first, endeavouring to secure the attention of his host or hostess, or at least of a chief guest, some person distinguished by high rank or great achievement ; these failing him at starting, or dropping him in disgust as his tale advances, he will descend a little lower, to some successful professional man, perhaps, or a prosperous artist. But these deserting him, his descent is rapid indeed, and it is not long before he is found addressing the concluding portion of a story, which he has clipped

and pared in all directions, to a poor relation, or to a youth of tender years just home for the holidays. This is a very distressing exhibition to witness, and one which we might be spared, if only men would diligently examine before taking up this *rôle* whether they possess the numerous qualifications necessary to the successful performing of the part. Some of these,—middle-age, namely, and a certain social position,—have been already spoken of, but there are others, of less moment, perhaps, than these, but still of considerable importance. There are, for instance, certain personal qualifications which it is highly desirable for a story-teller to possess. He should be a man of solid build ; he should have a powerful voice, a steady eye, with great command of countenance. This last qualification is very essential. There are stories,—and those of the most comic sort,—the success of which is endangered if the narrator should happen to look foolish or to smile feebly while they are being developed ; while if he should chance to burst out into a guffaw, he might as well break his story off at once, for any success that it is likely to have. A face under control is indeed indispensable to the story-teller. It need not be what is called an expressive face ; far from it. There are a great many stories the effect of which is enhanced by their being told by a person with a perfectly unmoveable countenance. To the actor a face capable of displaying numerous variations of expression is invaluable, but not to the story-teller of the highest class. The right face for this last is one with something queer about it, that sets people speculating. A grave face is best, with perhaps the faintest twinkle in the eyes, or the least twitch in the world about the corners of the mouth.

In considering the personal qualifications here set forth as so indispensably necessary to a habitual anecdapist or *raconteur*, it must be borne in mind that we are speaking only of the professors of one particular school of story-telling. This is the severe school, which requires of its disciples that they should maintain an imperturbable gravity while narrating even the most ludicrous incidents, and which forbids the narrator of a comic story to give even the very least indication of being himself amused by what amuses his audience. There are different opinions as to the merits of this school. To some persons they appear very great : whilst others will affirm that an observation of its precepts conduces to affectation, that a story told in accordance with them always gives too much evidence of effort and study to be agreeable, and that they like to see a man undisguisedly amused by the funny parts of his own narration. The fact is that there is something to be said on both sides of this very momentous question.

There are some stories which imperatively demand what may be called a dry treatment, and some story-tellers who can only make their effects by having recourse to a somewhat studied and artificial mode of narrating ; while to other stories, and other story-tellers, the more florid style is infinitely better adapted. The disciples of this last school may at least be

said to work harder than the professors of the more undemonstrative method. They are given to changes of expression and different modulations of voice ; they will introduce imitations into the course of their narrative, and will at all times indulge very freely in action. If a practitioner of this school tells you a story of a barber who says something exceedingly funny while engaged in the practice of his profession, the narrator will probably imitate the act of shaving while telling the story, or if a lady should happen to figure in the facetious incident which he is relating, he will very likely feign to arrange the folds of a dress, or flourish a fan in the most approved method. That the achievements of the best masters in this florid school are exceedingly entertaining there can be no doubt. The writer of these words has heard, before now, stories of Highland sport, stirring incidents of flood and field, told by a great professor of the florid school, with such subtle accompaniment of gesture and action, that those who listened have at last thought that they saw the struggling deer-hounds held back with difficulty by the gillies, and the keepers crouching out of sight among the rocks and heather.

To set before his audience what he describes, thus distinctly and vividly, is the special and peculiar gift of the best and most distinguished among these demonstrative story-tellers. But it is only for narratives of adventure or anecdotes of a broadly comic description that this treatment is good. When the story to be told is of a witty rather than a humorous sort, a story of quick answer or epigrammatic retort, whose crisis is, so to speak, of a spiritual rather than a corporeal nature, then, unquestionably, the value of a dry and undemonstrative treatment makes itself felt very strongly, and we are constrained to admit that no other can bring out the full flavour of this particular kind of mental food, which the story-teller provides for us.

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#### IV.—OF THE TALKER WHO DISCUSSES TOPICS.

BETWEEN the talker whose practice it is simply to describe his experiences, and that other talker whose conversation is of abstract subjects, there exists no doubt a considerable moral and intellectual difference. They are looked upon, by their respective audiences, with entirely different feelings. Although the first of these is certainly the more valuable man at a dinner-table, making more noise, and being capable of a more sustained effort than the other, he is yet, upon the whole, less respected. "It is all very well," says society, "to give us descriptions of English athletic sports or Arab prayer-meetings, but in doing this a man after all only speaks of what he has seen with his eyes, or heard with his ears. It must require a much more profound mind, and much greater power of thought, to take a subject, such as the imperfection of all things human, or the fitness of woman to exercise the elective franchise,—and discuss it thoroughly, as

the great Mr. Surface does, for instance." And no doubt if the great Mr. Surface did examine these matters thoroughly, and did manage to arrive at some distinct and practical conclusions in connection with the subjects which it is his habit to discuss, he would be entitled to some amount of consideration. But this is not his mode of proceeding; his practice being to stir up a subject, to start it, and worry it a little, and then let it go rather than to pursue it, to hold it tight, and get the life out of it at last.

This particular talker, whose speciality it is to discuss topics, is, as has been said, not comparable in value at a dinner-table to the conversationalist whose performances have been spoken of in a previous chapter; but he has his qualities, nevertheless. He is great in a country-house after luncheon, at a garden-party, or at afternoon tea. He is not afraid of the clever ladies of a party. Indeed, to get hold of a little clique of such persons is what he likes. "Ah, Lady Anne," he will say, addressing one of them in rather a tone of sadness; "does it not sometimes strike you that the world's getting very old? or, at any rate, that England is?" The lady addressed replies that she hardly knows, that it was always called "Old England," and then she smiles, and hesitates. "That is not exactly the sense in which I mean that England is old," Mr. Surface goes on. "What I mean is that, supposing a nation to have a term of life, as a man has,—to have, in short, its Seven Ages,—one would certainly not be inclined to regard England as having got no farther than the schoolboy or the lover stage." "Do you think she is 'sans eyes, sans teeth,' then, Mr. Surface?" inquires one of his audience. And so he is fairly launched, and in a position to give his reasons for thinking that his native country is no longer young. A sort of thing this that does very well at certain times, such as those mentioned above. We are a little too apt to suppose that when a talker is spoken of, a dinner-table talker only is meant; but there are other occasions when talk is wanted nearly as much as when a company assembles to partake of the principal meal of the day. No doubt it is then chiefly that talkers are wanted—chiefly, but not exclusively. In country-house life the necessity of talk is felt at every hour of the day. When some of the guests, for instance, are amusing themselves with croquet, there are always present others who become rabid at the mere mention of the game, and these require to be kept amused with conversation. Conversation is needed, too, when a large walking-party is organized; or again, when a drive is to constitute the afternoon's amusement, and a gentleman is wanted who will sit with his back to the horses, and will hold forth for the benefit of the three ladies with whom he shares the vehicle. Here the discusser of topics is distinctly valuable. He is not so valuable, perhaps, as the retailer of small personal gossip and petty scandal, but still he is of use on such occasions, and his merits must not be overlooked. And, once more, at a picnic, when the scramble for food and drink is over, and the partakers dispersed in little groups under the trees, in that state of semi-

intoxication which results from even the most moderate indulgence at 2 P.M., is there not a chance for our professor at such a time as this? At a picnic, or perhaps even more during the drive home, his services are priceless. A long drive is sometimes a rather tedious business, and it is a well-known fact that some persons, after being conveyed through the air in an open carriage for an hour or two, are apt to become depressed and absent, not to say morose. They get bored, in fact; and this is more especially the case when the drive partakes of the nature of a return journey —when we are *coming back* from a picnic, or a launch, or a laying of foundation stones, or other similar celebration. At such times all the less satisfactory ingredients in our cup become conspicuous in flavour, and unpleasantly self-assertive. We reflect upon the fact that the house in the country, which we have just taken, is on a clay soil, and that the situation is low; or we ponder as to where the money is to come from to supply that dreadful boy at college. Why we should think of such things at such times it is not easy to say, but that there is a tendency in the mind to busy itself with what are vulgarly called "bothers," on the occasions referred to, is a matter which no one can doubt who will carefully study the faces of homeward-bound excursionists in general, and of those who make their return journey in open carriages in particular. This, then, is the moment when a talker—and as I venture to maintain, the especial talker whose nature and habits we are just now considering—is precious, more than words can say. For this is the time when topic, and nothing but topic will do. A story would not get listened to, and a description of anything under the sun, from a coronation to a cock-fight, would be an intolerable bore. Even that prince of conversationalists, the scandal and gossip-monger, would not be able to compete with the practised and skilful discusser of topic on this particular occasion. This last-mentioned talker, by the very nature of his conversation, compels his associates to join in it themselves; and herein lies his especial value at such a moment as this with which we have now to do. There is but one way of alleviating the unhappiness of persons coming back from a junket, and that is to stimulate them in some way into action—to make them, in short, exert themselves; and this the man, who can artfully start a subject in which his audience is interested, will be able to do. "Who can look," he asks, "at a building like that"—the travellers are passing an old village church entirely devoid of all ornament or decoration—"and not feel that the extremest simplicity in all matters connected with the outward forms of religion is really the most beautiful, and certainly the most consistent with the spirit of true Protestantism?" By such a remark as this the object of our conversationalist is fulfilled in one moment. One of the ladies by whom he is accompanied is—as perhaps he knows—ritually disposed, while another is a frequenter of Exeter Hall, and altogether of the Low Church persuasion. Of course, these two get together instantly by the ears, each sustaining her own views with many potential, if illogical arguments, and both

referring to the original introducer of the subject under discussion for encouragement. But our professor is more a man to start a discussion than to bring it to an end, better at enunciating sentiments than at deciding disputes, and so he temporizes, and—which is just what he wanted to do—prolongs the discussion, so that the milestones fly by unheeded.

WOMAN and her Mission is another topic which this great conversation-artist often finds to answer his purpose particularly well. The subject may be brought in in the easiest way : a gleaner at work in the fields, or a girl wheeling a barrow by the wayside, will do,—and it will suit some companies as well as ritualism or church decoration does others. “There is something,” remarks our gentleman, looking absently at a market-girl trudging along the road with a basket of live poultry on her head—“There is something about the peculiar construction of the female form which always seems to me to preclude the idea that Nature intended it for work. Work is for us,” he continues, settling himself more at ease on the carriage cushions ; “work is for men, with their strong sinews and their active brain. The prevailing idea of WOMAN, as she should be, is the idea of a creature at leisure ; and although there is no doubt that the practical truth has been, in most countries and under most circumstances, widely at variance with this idea, yet, in referring back to any period, how remote so ever, of the world’s history, we shall most certainly find that the idea itself remains, and that the WOMAN whom men have always worshipped, whom our poets have sung, whom our painters have painted, and our sculptors have hewn out of the marble, is a woman with ‘nothing to do.’” A good beginning this surely. It is pretty certain to be said, by somebody or other, of a man like this, that he “talks well.” The fact is, that in dealing with a subject of this sort the special talker whose habits we are now considering is entirely at home. A topic which lends itself to a little display of fine language and sentiment, is what he really likes. He is great, for instance, on questions of love and matrimony, sympathy and antipathy. It is a common proceeding with him to look round about upon his audience, having first got the talk into the proper groove, and to ask which is, in their opinion, the greater happiness, loving or being loved ? For his part, he will say, the last seems to him by far the most delightful. He is of opinion that the knowledge that you are necessary to the happiness of some one else, is far more glorious than the feeling that some one else is necessary to yours. This is, indeed, a first-rate subject, and one which is hereby strongly recommended to the attention of any person who contemplates setting up in business as a topic-talker. It is one of those questions which has two sides to it, both capable of being sustained by many admirable arguments. The talker can either take up the passive theory, as we have just seen, with a fair show of reason, or he can go exactly the other way, and assert strongly that in the pleasure of being loved, there is, as it seems to him, a certain amount of selfishness mixed up ; while in the act of loving, on the contrary, a

man goes out of himself and (so to speak) merges his existence in another's. "It is of loving, not of being loved," he will add, "that the poet speaks when he says—

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might,  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

Our topicist is never averse to the introduction of an occasional line or two of poetry into his disquisitions; but he must not, because of this practice, be confounded with the "talker who quotes poetry." That individual belongs to a separate species, closely allied, indeed, to that of which the topic-talker is a member, but yet in many respects distinct. The difficulty of keeping apart individuals belonging undoubtedly to different species, yet having many points in common, is one which any students, the nature of whose labours is of the classifying sort, will readily appreciate.

We must take our leave now of our eloquent friend. But in doing so it seems worth while to remark concerning this form of talk which he favours, that it is of all others the best suited to persons of lazy and inactive habits. Those other conversationalists, whose manners and customs we have been examining, the talkers who respectively describe experiences, relate anecdotes, or retail gossip, must each and all work hard in order to come by the material which they are obliged to make use of. But it is not so with the gentleman who devotes himself, conversationally, to the discussion of topics. Profound as his studies may be, they at least do not involve him in any physical exertion. He can cultivate his art without sacrificing his ease. He is not obliged to run hither and thither in search of raw material required for the manufacture of the article in which he deals, but is able, on the contrary, to prepare those commodities in the retirement of his own chamber, or while strolling about under the trees in his friend's pleasure-grounds.

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#### V.—OF VARIOUS MINOR TALKERS.

I HAVE now advanced so far with my subject as to have examined with some degree of attention, the four principal specimens of the class whose habits we are studying. I come now to a consideration of some of the less distinguished members of the family of talkers; and just as the great writer on natural history, in dealing with some particular tribe,—say, for instance, the feline,—will first describe the *Felis leo*, or lion, and will then descend to the ounce, and the panther, and ultimately to the *Felis domesticus*, or tom-cat of our kitchen-hearths, so must I, having said my say about the great conversational lions and tigers who discuss topics or relate anecdotes, come down to some of the lower members of the species Talker, and study awhile their peculiarities and habits.

Occupying a foremost position among these, I find a small, but for its size exceedingly vigorous and active member of the garrulous species, to which the name "Perpetual-Drop Talker" may perhaps be given with some degree of propriety. In dealing with a new branch of science, as I am now doing, the use of new terms is inevitable, and it is hoped that this one, and such other technical expressions as have been introduced in the course of these chapters, will be favourably received by talk-students generally. The Perpetual-Drop Talker then,—I will venture to consider the term as accepted,—is a conversationalist of a species easily recognizable by all persons possessed of even moderate acuteness of perception. The chief and most remarkable characteristic of him is that his chatter is incessant, and that there issues from his mouth a perpetual dribble of words which convey to those who hear them no sort of information worth having, no new thing worth knowing, no idea worth listening to. These talkers are found in the British Islands in great numbers. There is no difficulty in meeting with specimens. If you live in a street, and will only sit at your window for a sufficient length of time, one of them is sure to pass. He has a companion with him, the recipient of that small dropping talk. Perpetual Drop points with his stick, calling his friend's attention to a baker's shop—what is he saying? He is saying, "Ah, German, you see; Frantzmann, German name. Great many German bakers in London: Germans and Scotch. Nearly all the bakers are either one or the other." You continue to watch, and you observe that this loquacious gentleman is again pointing.

"Where you see those houses," he is saying now, "there were nothing but green fields when I was a boy. Not a brick to be seen anywhere." And so he goes on commenting on everything. Whatever his senses inform him of he seems obliged to put on record. "Piebald horse," he says, as one goes by him in an omnibus; or "Curious smell," as he passes the fried-fish stall. This is the man with whom we have all travelled in railway trains. He proclaims to his companion—a person much to be pitied—the names of the stations as the train arrives at each. "Ah, Croydon," he says; or, "Ah, Redhill,—going to stop, I see." He makes his comments when they do stop. "Little girl with fruit," he says; or "Boy with papers." Very likely he will imitate the peculiar cry of this last, "Mornin' papaw," for his friend's benefit. This kind of talker may be studied very advantageously in railway trains. He is familiar with technical terms. He remarks, when there is a stoppage, that we are "being shunted on to the up-line till the express goes by." Presently there is a shriek, and a shake, and a whirl, and then our friend looks round with triumph. "That was it," he says, "Dover express,—down-line." This is a very wearying personage. He cannot be quiet. If he is positively run out and without a remark to make, he will ask a question. Instead of telling you what the station is, he will in this case ask you to tell him. "What station is this?" is a favourite inquiry with

him. He doesn't want to know ; he is not going to stop at it : he merely asks because his mouth is full of words, and they must needs dribble out in some form or other. In this case it takes an interrogative form. A tiresome individual this : one cannot help speculating as to how many times in the course of his life he has thought it necessary to inform his fellow-creatures that the morning has been fine, or cold, as the case might be, and the weather, generally, seasonable or the reverse.

I am dealing with the minor talkers. Among these a conspicuous place is held by one whom, for want of a better designation, I must call the Startling Talker. This is a conversationalist who goes in for being an original thinker, a character, a despiser of conventionalities. He is not a man who is going to be bound down by forms. He will not discourse of the weather, or the opera, or the exhibitions, as other people do. "Why should he ?" he will ask. He is fond of asserting his contempt for the stereotyped talk of the drawing-room or the dinner-table. When he is introduced to a partner for a quadrille, or to the young person who is to be his neighbour at dinner, it is as likely as not that he will begin by a sort of confession of his conversational faith. "I'm not going to ask you," he will say, "whether you have seen Lucca in *L'Africaine*, or whether you've read *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. Nor shall I expect you to question me on such subjects. Why should you ? What is it to you whether I have passed through either of these experiences ? What do you care for my opinion of 'Jephthah's Daughter,' by Millais ? Is it of the slightest importance to you whether I have seen the Paris Exhibition, or whether I rode in the Park this morning, and found it hot ?" This is a favourite kind of beginning with the subject of our present studies, and, for the most part, answers his purpose indifferently well, such talk eliciting in general, from the person to whom it is addressed, some amount of that amazement which it has been the object of the speaker to excite. He has other ways of stimulating this same emotion of surprise in those whose privilege it is to listen to his conversation. "I wonder," he will say, for instance, addressing a total stranger, "I wonder how many of the people sitting round the table will be alive in ten years from this time." Or perhaps he will moralize, by way of showing his originality of character. "I never make one of an assemblage of this sort without speculating as to the amount of care which each member of the company has brought out along with him. Did it ever," he will ask his companion abruptly, for sudden inquiries are much in his way—"Did it ever occur to you to occupy yourself with such a question ?" These sudden and bewildering inquiries are indeed an important part of the stock-in-trade of the genuine Startler. "Did you ever consider," he will demand of some timid young lady, "what death you would like to die ?" or, "Did it ever strike you that it would be a very pleasant thing to be thrown ashore on a desert island ?" The well-known gentleman—surely his name must have been Joseph Miller—who asked his partner in a quadrille whether she wore flannel next her skin,

must certainly have belonged to this tribe of startlers whose habits we are considering.

The position occupied by the members of this species, even among the minor talkers, is not a high one. The startler, with all his assumption of originality and profundity is, after all, but a poor creature. He counts on great submission and docility in those whom he engages in conversation. He preys upon timid women and young girls, who make convenient replies to his observations. "What a singular remark," or "What a strange person you are," they will say. So long as his startling sayings are received in this way he does very well, but he cannot carry out his own arguments, or support the paradoxes which he delights to start. If anybody stands up to him he is quickly at the end of his resources, and whenever he is requested to explain his meaning, floundering invariably ensues.

There is a variety of this species which may prove interesting to the talk-student, and which must, therefore, be noticed, though very briefly. This is the talker who deals in paradox, and whose greatest pleasure it is to controvert, as often as possible, the maxims which have been hitherto received by all mankind as indubitably and uncontestedly true. "Honesty the best policy," this gentleman will say in a scoffing tone; "there was never a greater mistake." And then he will go on to relate how he once knew a doctor who felt it to be his duty to tell one of his patients, a rich old lady, that there was nothing the matter with her, and how the medical gentleman in question not only thereby lost a patient who was a source of regular income to him, but also got cut out of the old lady's will, in which he had originally been down for a thumping legacy. "Honesty the best policy!" says this sceptic, derisively. "I believe it to be—in the present state of society—the very worst policy which can be made use of." "And who is it," this same personage will ask, "who says that man wants but little here below? Goldsmith, isn't it? Well, I'm ashamed of him. How could he display such gross ignorance? Little! Wants little! A man wants enormously much, as it seems to me. He wants a house in town, and an estate in the country, and a shooting-box in Scotland, and a *pied-à-terre* in Paris. He wants two comfortable carriages at the very lowest computation, and at least three coach-horses, and a hack for riding. He wants a coachman and grooms, and indoor servants and outdoor servants without number. He wants five great-coats of different thicknesses; but there is no end—positively no end—to his wants; and to make out even an incomplete list of them would occupy us from lunch till dinner-time at the very least." It is to sentiments of this sort that the paradoxical talker is in the habit of giving utterance. He will ask you in the gravest manner if you don't delight in an east-wind, and will tell you that he always feels in better health and in higher spirits when the wind blows from the east than at any other time. This is a very tiresome variety of talker; and being spasmodic in his utterances, and incapable of sustained

effort, he is of little value at the dinner-table, or indeed anywhere else. I think that there is nothing to be learnt by further consideration of his habits, so we may as well dismiss him at once.

There is a curious little personage of whom mention may fitly be made just now, and without some notice of whom no list of talkers would be complete. This is the phraseologist, an imitative talker who continually introduces conventional phrases into his unmeaning, harmless chatter. This is the individual who calls a horse "a steed," and a letter "an epistle." He talks about "festive boards" and "graphic descriptions," and when he goes to see a picture in the artist's studio will, ten to one, inform the painter that he has made "a great stride" since last year. I am afraid that this variety of the talking tribe is capable of calling a physician "a son of Esculapius;" and I know for certain that when he tells you a story in which what somebody said to him on a particular occasion has to be repeated, he always says, "He addressed me as follows."

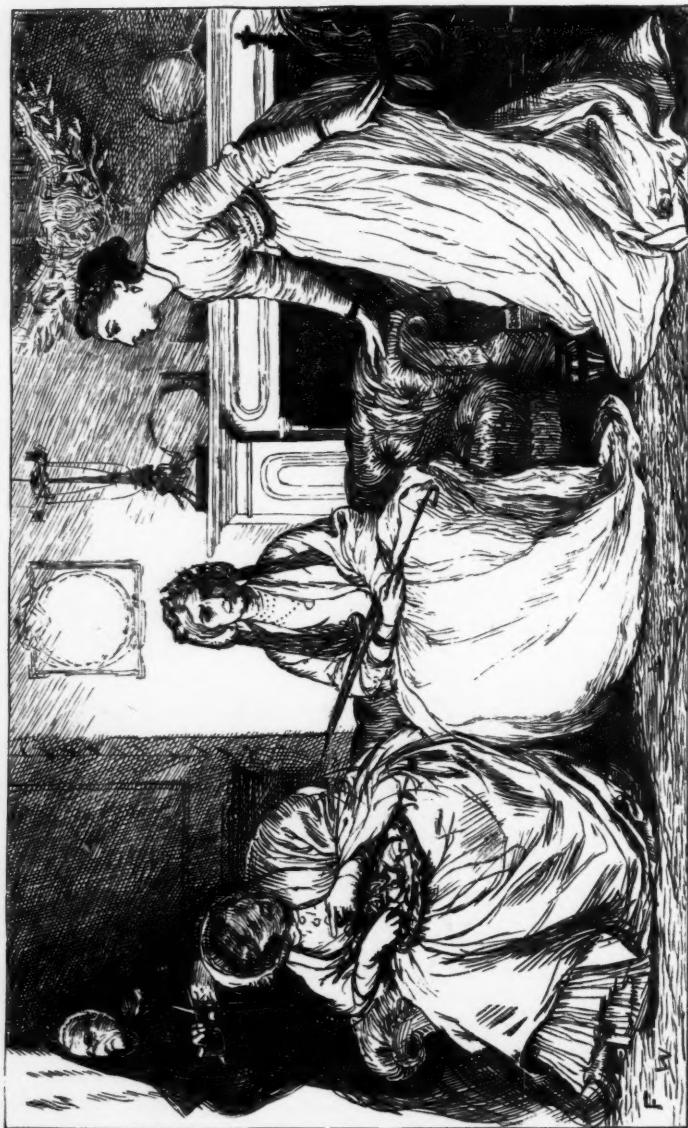
This little gentleman is extraordinarily polite to ladies. He jumps about like a parched-pea when a member of what he of course calls "the fair sex" enters the room. "Nay," he says, "if there are to be ladies of the party," and straightway he hugs to him, so to speak, every sort of discomfort, revelling in unnecessary and unappreciated self-sacrifice, and seeming to enjoy it. It is unnecessary to add that he calls fire the "devouring element;" and that when any one is drowned, he is spoken of as having found a "watery grave." He says of many things that they "manage this matter better in France," and Lord Macaulay's detestable New Zealander is seldom out of his mouth.

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THE FATHER.



## Jack the Giant-Killer.

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### JACK GOES TO SLEEP IN THE WOOD.



EATHERSTON VICARAGE was a quaint, dreary, silent old baked block of bricks and stucco, standing on one of those low Lincolnshire hillocks—I do not know the name for them. They are not hills, but mounds; they have no shape or individuality, but they roll in on every side; they enclose the horizon; they stop the currents of fresh air; they give no feature to the foreground. There was no reason why the vicarage should have been built upon this one, more than upon any other, of the monotonous waves of the dry ocean of land which spreads and spreads about Featherston, unchanging in its monotonous line. To look from

the upper windows of the vicarage is like looking out at sea, with nothing but the horizon to watch—a dull sand and dust horizon, with monotonous waves and lines that do not even change or blend like the waves of the sea.

Anne was delighted with the place when she first came. Of course it was not to compare with Sandsea for pleasantness and freshness, but the society was infinitely better. Not all the lodging-houses at Sandsea could supply such an eligible circle of acquaintances as that which came driving up day after day to the vicarage door. The carriages, after depositing their owners, would go champing up the road to the little tavern of "The Five Horseshoes," at the entrance of the village, in search of hay and beer for the horses and men. Anne in one afternoon entertained two honourables, a countess, and two Lady Louisas. The countess was Lady Kidderminster and one of the Lady Louisas was her daughter. The other was a nice old maid, a cousin of Mrs. Myles, and she told Mrs. Trevithic something more of poor Mary Myles' married life than Anne had ever known before.

"It is very distressing," said Anne, with a lady-like volubility, as she walked across the lawn with her guest to the carriage, "when married people do not get on comfortably together. Depend upon it, there are generally faults on both sides. I daresay it is very uncharitable of me, but I generally think the woman is to blame when things go wrong," said Anne, with a little conscious smirk. "Of course we must be content to give up some things when we marry. Sandsea was far pleasanter than this as a residence; but where my husband's interests were concerned, Lady Louisa, I did not hesitate. I hope to get this into some order in time, as soon as I can persuade Mr. Trevithic."

"You were quite right, quite right," said Lady Louisa, looking round approvingly at the grass-grown walks and straggling hedges. "Although Mary is my own cousin, I always felt that she did not understand poor Tom. Of course he had his little fidgety ways, like the rest of us."

(Mary had never described her husband's little fidgety ways to anybody at much length, and if brandy and blows and oaths were among them, these trifles were forgotten now that Tom was respectably interred in the family vault and beyond reproaches.)

Lady Louisa went away favourably impressed by young Mrs. Trevithic's good sense and high-mindedness. Anne, too, was very much pleased with her afternoon. She went and took a complacent turn in her garden after the old lady's departure. She hardly knew where the little paths led to as yet, nor the look of the fruit-walls and of the twigs against the sky, as people do who have well paced their garden-walks in rain, wind, and sunshine, in spirits and disquiet, at odd times and sad times and happy ones. It was all new to Mrs. Trevithic, and she glanced about as she went, planning a rose-tree here, a creeper there, a clearance among the laurels. "I must let in a peep of the church through that elm-clump, and plant some fuchsias along that bank," she thought. (Anne was fond of fuchsias.) And John must give me a hen-house. The cook can attend to it. The place looks melancholy and neglected without any animals about; we must certainly buy a pig. What a very delightful person Lady Kidderminster is; she asked me what sort of carriage we meant to keep—I should think with economy we *might* manage a pair. I shall get John to leave everything of that sort to me. I shall give him so much for his pocket-money and charities, and do the very best I can with the rest. And Anne sincerely meant it when she made this determination, and walked along better pleased than ever, feeling that with her hand to pilot it along the tortuous way their ship could not run aground, but would come straight and swift into the haven of country society, for which they were making, drawn by a couple of prancing horses, and a riding horse possibly for John. And seeing her husband coming through the gate and crossing the sloping lawn, Anne hurried to meet him with glowing pink cheeks and tips to her eyelids and nose, eager to tell him her schemes and adventures.

Trevithic himself had come home tired and dispirited, and he could

scarcely listen to his wife's chirrups with very great sympathy or encouragement.

"Lady Kidderminster wishes us to set up a carriage and a pair of horses!" Poor Trevithic cried out aghast, "Why, my dear Anne, you must be—must be . . . What do you imagine our income to be?"

"I know very well what it is," Anne said with a nod; "better than you do, sir. With care and economy a very great deal is to be done. Leave everything to me and don't trouble your foolish old head."

"But, my dear, you must listen for one minute," Trevithic said. "One thousand a year is not limitless. There are calls and drains upon our incomings—"

"That is exactly what I wanted to speak to you about, John," said his wife, gravely. "For one thing, I have been thinking that your mother has a very comfortable income of her own," Anne said, "and I am sure she would gladly . . ."

"I have no doubt she would," Trevithic interrupted, looking full in his wife's face, "and that is the reason that I desire that the subject may never be alluded to again, either to her or to me. He looked so decided and stern, and his grey eagle eyes opened wide in a way his wife knew that meant no denial. Vexed as she was, she could not help a momentary womanly feeling of admiration for the undaunted and decided rule of the governor of this small kingdom in which she was vicegerent; she felt a certain pride in her husband, not in what was best in his temper and heart, but in the outward signs that any one might read. His good looks, his manly bearing, his determination before which she had to give way again and again, impressed her oddly: she followed him with her eyes as he walked away into the house, and went on with her calculations as she still paced the gravel path, determining to come back secretly to the charge, as was her way, from another direction, and failing again, only to ponder upon a fresh attack.

And meanwhile Anne was tolerably happy trimming her rose-trees, and arranging and rearranging the furniture, visiting at the big houses, and corresponding with her friends, and playing on the piano, and, with her baby, in time, when it came to live with them in the vicarage. Trevithic was tolerably miserable, fuming and consuming his days in a restless, impatient search for the treasures which did not exist in the arid fields and lanes round about the vicarage. He certainly discovered a few well-to-do farmers riding about their enclosures on their rough horses, and responding with surly nods to his good-humoured advances; a few old women selling lollipops in their tidy front kitchens, shining pots and pans, starch caps, the very pictures of respectability; little tidy children trotting to school along the lanes, hand in hand, with all the strings on their pinafores, and hard-working mothers scrubbing their parlours, or hanging out their linen to dry. The cottages were few and far between, for the farmers farmed immense territories; the labourers were out in the fields at sunrise, and toiled all day, and staggered home worn-out and stupefied at night;

the little pinafores released from school at midday, would trot along the furrows with their fathers' and brothers' dinners tied up in bundles, and drop little frightened curtseys along the hedges when they met the vicar on his rounds. Dreary, dusty rounds they were—illimitable circles. The country-folks did not want his sermons, they were too stupid to understand what he said, they were too aimless and dispirited. Jack the Giant-Killer's sleep lasted exactly three years in Trevithic's case, during which the time did not pass, it only ceased to be. Once old Mr. Bellingham paid them a visit, and once Mrs. Trevithic, senior, arrived with her cap-boxes, and then every thing again went on as usual, until Dulcie came to live with her father and mother in the old sun-baked, wasp-haunted place.

Dulcie was a little portable almanac to mark the time for both of them, and the seasons and the hour of the day, something in this fashion :—

Six months and Dulcie began to crawl across the drugged floor of her father's study ; nine months to crow and hold out her arms ; a year must have gone by, for Dulcie was making sweet inarticulate chatterings and warblings, which changed into words by degrees—wonderful words of love and content and recognition, after her tiny life-long silence. Dulcie's clock marked the time of day something in this fashion :—

Dulcie's breakfast o'clock.

Dulcie's walk in the garden o'clock.

Dulcie's dinner o'clock.

Dulcie's bedtime o'clock, &c.

All the tenderness of Jack's heart was Dulcie's. Her little fat fingers would come tapping and scratching at his study-door long before she could walk. She was not in the least afraid of him, as her mother was sometimes. She did not care for his sad moods, nor sympathize with his ambitions, or understand the pangs and pains he suffered, the regrets and wounded vanities and aspirations. Was time passing, was he wasting his youth and strength in that forlorn and stagnant Lincolnshire fen ? What was it to her ? Little Dulcie thought that when he crossed his legs and danced her on his foot, her papa was fulfilling all the highest duties of life ; and when she let him kiss her soft cheek, it did not occur to her that every wish of her heart was not gratified. Hard-hearted, unsympathetic, trustful, and appealing little comforter and companion ! Whatever it might be to Anne, not even Lady Kidderminster's society soothed and comforted Jack as Dulcie's did. This small Egyptian was a hard task-mistress, for she gave him bricks to make without any straw, and kept him a prisoner in a land of bondage ; but for her he would have thrown up the work that was so insufficient for him, and crossed the Red Sea, and chanced the fortunes of life ; but with Dulcie and her mother hanging to the skirts of his long black clerical coat, how could he go ? Ought he to go ? 400*l.* a year is a large sum to get together, but a small one to provide for three people—so long as a leg of mutton costs seven

shillings and there are but twenty shillings in the pound and 365 days in the year.

It was a hot, sultry afternoon, the dust was lying thick upon the lanes, on the country roads, that went creeping away white in the glare to this and that distant sleepy hollow. The leaves in the hedges were hanging upon their stalks ; the convolvulus and blackberries drooped their heads beneath the clouds that rose from the wreaths and piles of dust along the way. Four o'clock was striking from the steeple, and echoing through the hot still air ; nobody was to be seen, except one distant figure crossing a stubble-field ; the vicarage windows were close shuttered, but the gate was on the latch, and the big dog had just sauntered lazily through. Anne heard the clock strike from her darkened bed-room, where she was lying upon the sofa resting. Dulcie playing in her nursery counted the strokes. "Tebben, two, one ; nonner one," that was how she counted. John heard the clock strike as he was crossing the dismal stubble-field ; everything else was silent. Two butterflies went flitting before him in the desolate glare. It was all so still, so dreary, and feverish, that he tried to escape into a shadier field, and to force his way through a gap in the parched hedge regardless of Farmer Burr's fences and restrictions.

On the other side of the hedge there was a smaller field, a hollow with long grasses and nut hedges and a little shade, and a ditch over which Trevithic sprang with some remnant of youthful spirit. He sprang, breaking through the briars and countless twigs and limp wretched leaves, making a foot-standing for himself among the lank grasses and dull autumn flowers on the other side, and as he sprang he caught a sight of something lying in the ditch, something with half-open lips and dim glazed eyes, turned upwards under the crossing diamond network of the shadow and light of the briars.

What was this that was quite still, quite inanimate, lying in the sultry glow of the autumn day ? Jack turned a little sick, and leapt back down among the dead leaves, and stooped over a wan helpless figure lying there motionless and ghastly, with its head sunk back in the dust and tangled weeds. It was only a worn and miserable-looking old man, whose meek, starved, weary face was upturned to the sky, whose wan lips were drawn apart, and whose thin hands were clutching at the weeds. Jack gently tried to loosen the clutch, and the poor fingers gave way in an instant and fell helplessly among the grasses, frightening a field-mouse back into its hole. But this helpless, loose fall first gave Trevithic some idea of life in the hopeless figure, for all its wan, rigid lines. He put his hand under the rags which covered the breast. There was no pulse at first, but presently the heart just fluttered, and a little colour came into the pale face, and there was a long sigh, and then the glazed eyes closed.

John set to work to rub the cold hands and the stiff body. It was all he could do, for people don't walk about with bottles of brandy and blankets in their pockets ; but he rubbed and rubbed, and some of the magnetism of

his own vigorous existence seemed to enter into the poor soul at his knees, and another faint flush of life came into the face, and the eyes opened this time naturally and bright, and the figure pointed faintly to its lips. Jack understood, and he nodded ; gave a tug to the man's shoulders, and propped him up a little higher against the bank. Then he tied his handkerchief round the poor old bald head to protect it from the sun, and sprang up the side of the ditch. He had remembered a turnpike upon the highway, two or three hundred yards beyond the boundary of the next field.

Lady Kidderminster, who happened to be driving along that afternoon on her way to the Potlington flower-show, and who was leaning back comfortably under the hood of her great yellow barouche, was surprised to see from under the fringe of her parasol the figure of a man suddenly bursting through a hedge on the roadside, and waving a hat and shouting, red, heated, disordered, frantically signing to the coachman to stop.

"It's a Fenian," screamed her ladyship.

"I think ;—yes, it's Mr. Trevithic," said her companion.

The coachman, too, had recognized Jack and began to draw up ; but the young man, who had now reached the side of the carriage, signed to him to go on.

"Will you give me a lift ?" he said, gasping and springing on to the step. "How d'ye do, Lady Kidderminster ? I heard your wheels and made an effort," and Jack turned rather pale. "There is a poor fellow dying in a ditch. I want some brandy for him and some help ; stop at the turnpike," he shouted to the coachman, and then he turned with very good grace to Lady Kidderminster, aghast and not over-pleased. "Pray forgive me," he said. "It was such a chance catching you. I never thought I should have done it. I was two fields off. Why, how d'ye do, Mrs. Myles?" And still holding on to the yellow barouche by one hand, he put out the other to his old acquaintance, Mary Myles, with the still kind eyes, who was sitting in state by the countess.

"You will take me back, and the brandy, I know ?" said Trevithic.

"Is it anybody one knows ?" said the countess.

"Only some tramp," said Jack : "but it's a mercy I met you." And before they reached the turnpike, he had jumped down, and was explaining his wants to the bewildered old chip of a woman who collected the tolls.

"Your husband not here ? a pity," said John. "Give me his brandy-bottle ; it will be of some good for once." And he disappeared into the lodge, saying,— "Would you please have the horses' heads turned, Lady Kidderminster ? In a minute he was out again. Here, put this in" (to the powdered footman), and John thrust a blanket off the bed, an old three-legged chair, a wash-jug full of water, and one or two more miscellaneous objects into the man's arms. "Now back again," he said, "as quick as you can !" And he jumped in with his brandy ; and the great barouche groaned, and at his command actually sped off once more along the road. "Make haste," said Trevithic ; "the man is dying for want of a dram."

The sun blazed hot in their faces. The footman sat puzzled and disgusted on his perch, clasping the blanket and the water-jug. Lady Kidderminster was not sure that she was not offended by all the orders Mr. Trevithic was giving her servants; Mrs. Myles held the three-legged chair up on the seat opposite with her slender wrist, and looked kind and sympathetic; John hardly spoke,—he was thinking what would be best to do next.

"I am so sorry," he said, "but I am afraid you must wait for us, Lady Kidderminster. I'll bring him up as soon as I can, and we will drop him at the first cottage. You see nobody else may pass for hours."

"We shall be very late for our fl—," Lady Kidderminster began, faintly, and then stopped ashamed at the look in Trevithic's honest face which she saw reflected in Mrs. Myles' eyes.

"Oh, my dear Lady Kidderminster," cried Mrs. Myles, bending forward from her nest of white muslins. "We *must* wait."

"Of course we will wait," said Lady Kidderminster hastily, as the coachman stopped at the gap through which Jack had first made his appearance. Trevithic was out in an instant.

"Bring those things quick," said Jack to the magnificent powder-and-plush man; and he set off running himself as hard as he could go, with his brandy-flask in one hand and the water-jug in the other.

For an instant the man hesitated and looked at his mistress, but Lady Kidderminster had now caught something of Mr. Trevithic's energy: she imperiously pointed to the three-legged chair, and Tomlins, who was good-natured in the main, seeing Jack's figure rapidly disappearing in the distance, began to run too, with his silken legs plunging wildly, for pumps and stubble are not the most comfortable of combinations. When Tomlins reached the ditch at last, Jack was pouring old Glossop's treacle-like brandy down the poor gasping tramp's throat, dashing water into his face and gradually bringing him to life again; the sun was streaming upon the two, the insects buzzing, and the church clock striking the half-hour.

There are combinations in life more extraordinary than pumps and ploughed fields. When Trevithic and Tomlins staggered up to the carriage carrying the poor old ragged, half-lifeless creature on the chair between them, the two be-satined and be-feathered ladies made way and helped them to put poor helpless old Davy Hopkins with all his rags into the soft-cushioned corner, and drove off with him in triumph to the little public at the entrance of Featherston, where they left him.

"You have saved that man's life," said Jack, as he said good-by to the two ladies. They left him standing, glad and excited, in the middle of the road, with bright eyes and more animation and interest in his face than there had been for many a day.

"My dear Jack, what is this I hear?" said Anne, when he got home. "Have you been to the flower-show with Lady Kidderminster? Who was that in the carriage with her? What a state you are in."

Jack told her his story, but Mrs. Trevithic scarcely listened. "Oh," said she, "I thought you had been doing something pleasant. Mrs. Myles was very kind. It seems to me rather a fuss about nothing, but of course you know best."

Little Dulcie saw her father looking vexed: she climbed up his leg and got on his knee, and put her round soft cheek against his. "Sall I luboo?" said she.

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## CHAPTER V.

### BLUNDERBORE AND HIS TWO HEADS.

WHEN Jack went to see his *protégé* next day, he found the old man sitting up in the bar warming his toes, and finishing off a basin of gruel and a tumbler of porter with which the landlady had supplied him. Mrs. Penfold was a frozen sort of woman, difficult to deal with, but kind-hearted when the thaw once set in, and though at first she had all but refused to receive poor old Davy into her house, once having relented and opened her door to him she had warmed and comforted him, and brought him to life in triumph, and now looked upon him with a certain self-contained pride and satisfaction as a favourable specimen of her art.

"He's right eno'," said Mrs. Penfold, with a jerk of the head. "Ye can go in and see him in the bar." And Jack went in.

The bar was a comfortable little oaken refuge and haven for Miles and Hodge, where they stretched their stiff legs safe from the scoldings of their wives and the shrill cries of their children. The shadows of the sunny-latticed window struck upon the wooden floor, the fire burnt most part of the year on the stone hearth, where the dry branches and logs were crackling cheerfully, with a huge black kettle hissing upon the bars. Some one had christened it "Tom," and from its crooked old-spout at any hour of the day a hot and sparkling stream went flowing into the smoking grog-glasses, and into Penfold's punch-pots and Mrs. Penfold's teacups and soup-pans.

Davy's story was a common one enough,—a travelling umbrella-mender—hard times—fine weather, no umbrellas to mend, and "parasols ain't no good; so cheap they are," he said, with a shake of the head; "they ain't worth the mendin'!" Then an illness, and then the work-house, and that was all his history.

"I ain't sorry I come out of the 'ouse; the ditch was the best place of the two," said Davy. "You picked me out of the ditch; you'd have left me in the 'ouse, sir, all along with the ruck. I don't blame ye," Davy said; "I see'd ye there for the first time when I was wuss off than I ever hope to be in this life again; ye looked me full in the face, and talked on with them two after ye—devil take them, and he wil!"

"I don't remember you," said John. "Where was it?"

"Hammersley workus," said Davy. "Don't you remember Ham-

mersley Union? I was in the bed under the winder, and I says to my pardner (there were two on us), says I,—‘ That chap looks as if he might do us a turn.’ ‘ Not he,’ says my pardner. ‘ They are werry charitable, and come and stare at us; that’s all,’ says he, and he was right you see, sir. He’d been in five years come Christmas, and knew more about it than I did then.’

“ And you have left it now?” said Trevithic, with a strange expression of pity in his face.

“ So I ’ave, sir, I’m bound to say,” said Davy, finishing off his porter, “ and I’d rather die in the ditch any day than go back to that d—— place.”

“ It looked clean and comfortable enough,” said Trevithic.

“ Clean, comfirable!” said Davy. “ Do you think *I* minds a little dirt, sir? Did you look under the quilts? Why, the vermin was a-running all over the place like flies, so it were. It come dropping from the ceiling; and my pardner he were paralytic, and he used to get me to wipe the bugs off his face with a piece of paper. Shall I tell ye what it was like?” And old Davy, in his ire, began a history so horrible, so sickening, that Trevithic flushed up as he listened,—an honest flush and fire of shame and indignation.

“ I tell you fairly I don’t believe half you say,” said Jack, at last. “ It is too horrible and unnatural.”

“ True there,” said Davy, comforted by his porter and his gruel. “ It ain’t no great matter to me if you believes ’arf or not, sir. I’m out of that hole, and I ain’t agoin’ back. Maybe your good lady has an umbrella wants seeing to; shall I call round and ask this afternoon, sir?”

Jack nodded and said he might come if he liked, and went home, thinking over the history he had heard. It was one of all the histories daily told in the sunshine, of deeds done in darkness. It was one grain of seed falling into the ground and taking root. Jack felt a dull feeling of shame and sadness; an uncomfortable pricking as of a conscience which had been benumbed; a sudden pain of remorse, as he walked along the dusty lane which led to the vicarage. He found his wife in the drawing-room, writing little scented notes to some of her new friends, and accepting proffered dinners and teas and county hospitalities. Little Dulcie was lying on her back on a rug, and crooning and chattering; the shutters were closed; there was a whiff of roses and scented water coming in from the baking lanes. It was a pretty home-picture, all painted in cool whites and greys and shadows, and yet it had by degrees grown intolerable to him. Jack looked round, and up and down, and then with a sudden impulse he went up and took his wife’s hand, and looked her full in the face. “ Anne,” he said, “ could you give up something for me—something, everything, except what is yours as a right? Dear, it is all so nice, but I am very unhappy here. May I give up this pretty home, and will you come and live with me where we can be of more use than we are here?” He looked so kind and so imploring, that for

an instant Anne almost gave way and agreed to anything. There was a bright constraining power in Jack's blue eye which had to deal with magnetism, I believe, and which his wife was one of the few people to resist. She recovered herself almost immediately.

"How ridiculous you are, John," she said, pettishly. "Of course I will do anything in reason; but it seems to me very wrong and unnatural and ungrateful of you," said Mrs. Trevithic, encouraging herself as she went on, "not to be happy when you have so much to be thankful for; and though, of course, I should be the last to allude to it, yet I do think when I have persuaded papa to appoint you to this excellent living, considering how young you are and how much you owe to him, it is not *graceful*, to say the least, on your part . . . ."

John turned away and caught up little Dulcie, and began tossing her in the air. "Well," said he, "we won't discuss this now. I have made up my mind to take a week's holiday," he added, with a sort of laugh. "I am going to stay with Frank Austin till Saturday. Will you tell them to pack up my things?"

"But, my dear, we are engaged to the Kidd . . . ."

"You must write and make my excuses," Jack said, wearily. "I must go. I have some business at Hammersley." And he left the room.

Chances turn out so strangely at times that some people,—women especially, who live quietly at home and speculate upon small matters—look on from afar and wonder among themselves as they mark the extraordinary chain-work of minute stitches by which the mighty machinery of the world works on. Men who are busy and about, here and there in life, are more apt to take things as they find them, and do not stop to speculate how this or that comes to be. It struck Jack oddly when he heard from his friend Frank Austin that the chaplain who had been elected instead of him at the workhouse was ill and obliged to go away for a time. "He is trying to find some one to take his place, and to get off for a holiday," said Mr. Austin. "He is a poor sort of creature, and I don't think he has got on very well with the guardians."

"I wonder," said Trevithic, "whether I could take the thing for a time? We might exchange, you know; I am tired of play, heaven knows. There is little enough to do at Featherston, and he might easily look after my flock while I take the work here off his hands."

"I know you always had a hankering after those unsavoury flesh-pots," Austin said, with a laugh. "I should think Skipper would jump at your offer, and from all I hear there is plenty to be done here, if it is work you are in want of. Poor little Skipper did his best at one time; I believe he tried to collect a fund for some of the poor creatures who couldn't be taken in, but what is one small fish like him among so many guardians?" said Mr. Austin, indulging in one of those clerical jokes to which Mr. Trollope has alluded in his delightful *Chronicles*.

Jack wrote off to his bishop and to his wife by that day's post. Two

different answers reached him ; his wife's came next day, his bishop's three days later.

Poor Anne was frantic, as well she might be. "Come to Hammersley for two months in the heat of the summer ; bring little Dulcie ; break up her home !—Never. Throw over Lady Kidderminster's Saturdays ; admit a stranger to the vicarage !—Never ! Was her husband out of his senses ?" She was deeply, deeply hurt. He must come back immediately, or more serious consequences than he imagined might ensue.

Trevithic's eyes filled up with tears as he crumpled the note up in his hand and flung it across the room. It was for this he had sacrificed the hope of his youth, of his life,—for this. It was too late now to regret, to think of what another fate might have been. Marriage had done him this cruel service :—It had taught what happiness might be, what some love might be, but it had withheld the sweetness of the fruit of the tree of life, and only disclosed the knowledge of good and of evil to this unhappy Adam outside the gates of the garden.

Old Mr. Bellingham did not mend matters by writing a trembling and long-winded remonstrance. Lady Kidderminster, to whom Anne had complained, pronounced Trevithic mad ; she had had some idea of the kind, she said, that day when he behaved in that extraordinary manner in the lane.

"It's a benevolent mania," said Lord Axminster, her eldest son.

Mrs. Myles shook her head, and began, "He is not mad, most noble lady. . . ." Mrs. Trevithic, who was present, flushed up with resentment at Mrs. Myles venturing to quote scripture in Jack's behalf. She did not look over-pleased when Mrs. Myles added that she should see Mr. Trevithic probably when she went to stay at Hammersley with her cousin, Mrs. Garnier, and would certainly go and see him at his work.

Jack, who was in a strange determined mood, meanwhile wrote back to his wife to say that he felt that it was all very hard upon her ; that he asked it from her goodness to him and her wifely love ; that he would make her very happy if she would only consent to come, and if not she must go to her father's for a few weeks until he had got this work done. "Indeed it is no sudden freak, dear," he wrote. "I had it in my mind before"—(John hesitated here for a minute and took his pen off the paper)—"that eventful day when I walked up to the rector, and saw you and learnt to know you." So he finished his sentence. But his heart sank as he posted the letter. Ah me ! he had dreamed a different dream.

If his correspondence with his wife did not prosper as it should have done, poor Trevithic was greatly cheered by the bishop's letter, which not only gave consent to this present scheme, but offered him, if he wished for more active duty, the incumbency of St. Bigots in the North, which would shortly be vacant in Hammersley, and which, although less valuable than his present living as far as the income was concerned, was much more so as regards the souls to be saved, which were included in the bargain.

New brooms sweep clean, says the good old adage. After he took up his residence at St. Magdalene's, Jack's broomstick did not begin to sweep for seven whole days. He did not go back to Featherston ; Anne had left for Sandsea ; and Mr. Skipper was in possession of the rectory, and Trevithic was left in that of 500 paupers in various stages of misery and decrepitude, and of a two-headed creature called Bulcox, otherwise termed the master and the matron of the place. Jack waited ; he felt that if he began too soon he might ruin everything, get into trouble, stir up the dust, which had been lying so thickly, and make matters worse than before ; he waited, watched, looked about him, asked endless questions, to not one of which the poor folks dared give a truthful answer. "Nurse was werry kind, that she was, and most kinsiderate, up any time o' night and day," gasped poor wretches, whose last pinch of tea had just been violently appropriated by "nurse" with the fierce eyebrows sitting over the fire, and who would lie for hours in an agony of pain before they dared awaken her from her weary sleep. For nurse, whatever her hard rapacious heart might be, was only made of the same aching bones and feeble flesh as the rest of them. "Everybody was kind and good, and the mistress came round reg'lar and ast them what they wanted. The tea was not so nico perhaps as it *might* be, but they was not wishin' to complain." So they moaned on for the first three days. On the fourth one or two cleverer and more truthful than the rest began to whisper that "nurse" sometimes indulged in a drop too much ; that she had been very unmanageable the night before, had boxed poor Tilly's ears—poor simpleton. They all loved Tilly, and didn't like to see her hurt. See, there was the bruise on her cheek, and Tilly, a woman of thirty, but a child in her ways, came shyly up in a pinafore, with a doll in one arm and a finger in her mouth. All the old hags sitting on their beds smiled at her as she went along. This poor witless Tilly was the pet of the ward, and they did not like to have her beaten. Trevithic was affected, he brought Tilly some sugar-plums in his pocket, and the old toothless crones brightened up and thanked him, nodding their white night-caps encouragingly from every bed. Meanwhile John sickened : the sights, the smells, the depression of spirits produced by this vast suffering mass of his unlucky brothers and sisters, was too much for him, and for a couple of days he took to his bed. The matron came to see him twice ; she took an interest in this cheerful new element, sparkling still with full reflection of the world outside. She glanced admiringly at his neatly appointed dressing-table, the silver top to his shaving-gear, and the ivory brushes.

John was feverish and thirsty, and was draining a bottle of mirky-looking water when Mrs. Bulcox came into the room. "What is that you are drinking there, sir ?" said she. "My goodness, it's the water from the tap,—we never touch it ! I'll send you some of ours ; the tap-water comes through the cesspool and is as nasty as nasty can be."

"Is it what they habitually drink here ?" Trevithic asked, languidly.

"They're used to it," said Mrs. Bulcox ; "nothing hurts them."

Jack turned away with an impatient movement, and Mrs. Bulcox went off indignant at his want of courtesy. The fact was, that Jack already knew more of the Bulcox's doings than they had any conception of, poor wretches, as they lay snoring the comfortable sleep of callousness on their snug pillows. "I don't 'alf like that chap," Mr. Bulcox had remarked to his wife, and Mrs. Bulcox had heartily echoed the misgiving. "I go to see him when he is ill," said she, "and he cuts me off as sharp as anything. What business has he comin' prying and spying about the place?"

What indeed! The place oppressed poor Jack, tossing on his bed; it seemed to close in upon him, the atmosphere appeared to be full of horrible moans and suggestions. In his normal condition Jack would have gone to sleep like a top, done his best, troubled his head no more on the subject of troubles he could not relieve; but just now he was out of health, out of spirits—although his darling desire was his—and more susceptible to nervous influences and suggestions than he had ever been in his life before. This night especially he was haunted and overpowered by the closeness and stillness of his room. It looked out through bars into a narrow street, and a nervous feeling of imprisonment and helplessness came over him so strongly that, to shake it off, he jumped up at last and partly dressed himself, and began to pace up and down the room. The popular history of Jack the Giant-Killer gives a ghastly account of the abode of Blunderbore; it describes "an immense room where lay the limbs of the people lately seized and devoured," and Blunderbore "with a horrid grin" telling Jack "that men's hearts eaten with pepper and vinegar were his nicest food. The giant then locked Jack up," says the history, "and went to fetch a friend."

Poor Trevithic felt something in Jack's position when the gates were closed for the night, and he found himself shut in with his miserable companions. He could from his room hear the bolts and the bars and the grinding of the lock, and immediately a longing would seize him to get out.

To-night, after pacing up and down, he at last took up his hat and a light in his hand, and opened his door and walked downstairs to assure himself of his liberty and get rid of this oppressive feeling of confinement. He passed the master's door and heard his snores, and then he came to the lower door opening into the inner court. The keys were in it—it was only locked on the inside. As Jack came out into the courtyard he gave a great breath of relief: the stars were shining thickly overhead, very still, very bright; the place seemed less God-forgotten than when he was up there in his bedroom: the fresh night-air blew in his face and extinguished his light. He did not care, he put it down in a corner by the door, and went on into the middle of the yard and looked all round about him. Here and there from some of the windows a faint light was burning and painting the bars in gigantic shadows upon the walls; and at the end of the court, from what seemed like a grating

to a cellar, some dim rays were streaming upward. Trevithic was surprised to see a light in such a place and he walked up to see, and then he turned quickly away, and if like uncle Toby he swore a great oath at the horrible sight he saw, it was but an expression of honest pity and most Christian charity. The grating was a double grating and looked into two cellars which were used as casual wards when the regular ward was full. The sight Trevithic saw is not one that I can describe here. People have read of such things as they are and were only a little while ago when the *Pall Mall Gazette* first published that terrible account which set people talking and asking whether such things should be and could be still.

Old Davy had told him a great many sad and horrible things, but they were not so sad or so horrible as the truth, as Jack now saw it. Truth, naked, alas! covered with dirt and vermin, shuddering with cold, moaning with disease, and heaped and tossed in miserable uneasy sleep at the bottom of her foul well. Every now and then a voice broke the darkness, or a cough or a moan reached him from the sleepers above. Jack did not improve his night's rest by his midnight wandering.

Trevithic got well, however, next day, dressed himself, and went down into the little office which had been assigned to him. His bedroom was over the gateway of the workhouse and looked into the street. From his office he had only a sight of the men's court, the wooden bench, the stone steps, the grating. Inside was a stove and green drugget, a little library of books covered with greasy brown paper for the use of those who could read. There was not much to comfort or cheer him, and as he sat there he began

to think a little disconsolately of his pleasant home, with its clean comfortable appointments, the flowers round the window, the fresh chintzes, and, above all, the dear little round face upturned to meet him at every coming home.

It would not do to think of such things, and Jack put them away, but he wished that Anne had consented to come to him. It seemed hard to be there alone—him a father and a husband, with belongings of his own. Trevithic, who was still weak and out of sorts, found himself making a little languid castle in the air, of crooked places made straight, of whitened sepulchres made clean, of Dulcie, grown tall and sensible, coming tapping at his door to cheer him when he was sad, and encourage him when he was weary.

Had the fever come back, and could it be that he was wandering? It seemed to him that all the heads of the old men he could see through the grating were turning, and that an apparition was passing by—an apparition, gracious, smiling, looking in through the bars of his window, and coming gently knocking at his door; and then it opened, and a low voice said,—“It's me, Mr. Trevithic—Mrs. Myles; may I come in?” and a cool, grey phantom stepped into the dark little room. “How ill you are looking,” Mrs. Myles said, compassionately. “I came to ask you to come back and dine with us; I am only here for a day or two with my cousin

Fanny Garnier. She visits this place and brought me, and I thought of asking for you ; and do come, Mr. Trevithic. These--these persons showed me the way to your study." And she looked back at the grinning old heads that were peeping in at the door. Mary Myles looked like the lady in *Comus*--so sweet, and pure, and fair, with the grotesque faces, peering and whispering all about her. They vanished when Trevithic turned, and stood behind the door watching and chattering like apes, for the pretty lady to come out again. "I cannot tell you how glad we are that you have come here, Mr. Trevithic," said Mrs. Myles. "Poor Fanny has half broken her heart over the place, and Mr. Skipper was so hopeless that it was no use urging him to appeal. You will do more good in a week than he has done in a year. I must not wait now," Mrs. Myles added. "You will come, won't you ?--at seven ; we have so much to say to you. Here is the address."

As soon as Jack had promised to come, she left him, disappearing with her strange little court hobbling after her to the very gate of the dreary place.

Jack was destined to have more than one visitor that afternoon. As he still sat writing busily at his desk in the little office, a tap came at the door. It was a different apparition this time, for an old woman's head peeped in, and an old nutcracker-looking body, in her charity-girl's livery, staggered feebly into his office and stood grinning slyly at him. "She came to borrow a book," she said. "She couldn't read, not she, but, law bless him, that was no matter." Then she hesitated. "He had been speaking to Mike Rogers that morning. You wouldn't go and get us into trouble," said the old crone, with a wistful, doubtful scanning interrogation of the eyes : "but I am his good lady, and 'ave been these thirty years, and it do seem hard upon the gals, and if you could speak the word, sir, and get them out. . . ."

"Out?" said Jack.

"From the black kitchen--so they name it," said the old crone, mysteriously : "the cellar under the master's stairs. Kate Hill has been in and out a week come yesterday. I knowed her grandmother, poor soul. She shouldn't have spoke tighty to the missis ; but she is young and don't know no better, and my good man and me was thinking if maybe you could say a word, sir--as if from yourself. Maybe you heard her as you went upstairs, sir ; for we know our cries is 'eard."

So this was it. The moans in the air were not fancy, the complainings had been the real complaints of some one in suffering and pain.

"Here is the book," said Jack, suddenly ; "and I'm afraid you can have no more snuff, ma'am." And with a start poor old Betty Rogers nearly stumbled over the matron, who was standing at his door.

"Well, what is it you're wanting now?" said Mrs. Bulcox. "You mustn't allow them to come troubling you, Mr. Trevithic."

"I am not here for long, Mrs. Bulcox," said Jack, shrugging his shoulders. "While I stay I may as well do all I can for these poor creatures."

A gleam of satisfaction came into Mrs. Bulcox's face at the notion of his approaching departure. He had been writing all the morning, covering sheets and sheets of paper. He had been doing no harm, and she felt she could go out for an hour with her Bulcox, with an easy mind.

As Mr. and Mrs. Bulcox came home together, Jack, who was looking from his bedroom window, saw them walking up the street. He had put up his sheets of paper in an envelope, and stamped it, and addressed it. He had not wasted his time during their absence, and he had visited a part of the workhouse unknown to him before, having bribed one pauper and frightened another into showing him the way. Mr. Bulcox coming under the window heard Jack calling to him affably. "Would you be so kind as to post this packet for me?" cried Jack. The post-box was next-door to the workhouse. "Thank you," he said, as Mr. Bulcox picked up the thick letter which came falling to the ground at his feet. It was addressed to Colonel the Hon. Charles Hambledon, Lowndes Square, London. "Keeps very 'igh company," said Bulcox to his wife, and he felt quite pleased to post a letter addressed to so distinguished a personage.

"Thank you," said Jack again, looking very savagely pleased and amused; "it was of importance." He did not add that it was a letter to the editor of the *Jupiter*, who was a friend of his friend's. Trevithic liked the notion of having got Bulcox to fix the noose round his own neck. He felt ashamed of the part he was playing, but he did not hurry himself for that. It was necessary to know all, in order to sweep clean once he began. Poor Kate Hill still in durance received a mysterious and encouraging message, and one or two comforts were smuggled in to her by her gaoler. On the Wednesday morning his letter would appear in the *Jupiter*—nothing more could be done until then. Next day was Tuesday: he would go over to Sandsea and talk Anne into reason, and get back in time for the board; and in the meantime Jack dressed himself and went to dine with the widows.

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#### CHAPTER VI.

##### THE PARCÆ CUT A THREAD OF MRS. TREVITHIC'S KNITTING.

Mrs. MYLES' cousin, Mrs. Garnier, lived in a quaint, comfortable-looking low house on the Chester high-road, with one or two bow-windows and gables standing out for no apparent reason, and a gallery upstairs, with four or five windows, which led to the drawing-room.

The two widows were very fond of one another and often together; there was a similarity in tastes and age and circumstance. The chief difference in their fate had been this—that Fanny Garnier had loved her husband, although she could not agree with him—for loving and agreeing do not go together always—and Mary Myles' married life had been at best a struggle for indifference and forgiveness; she was not a very easily

moulded woman ; she could do no more than forgive and repent her own ill-doing in marrying as she did.

The trace of their two lives was set upon the cousins. A certain coldness and self-reliance, a power of living for to-day and forgetting, was the chief gift that had come to Mary Myles out of the past experience of her life. Fanny Garnier was softer, more impressionable, more easily touched and assimilated by the people with whom she came in contact ; she was less crisp and bright than Mary, and older, though she was the same age. She had loved more and sorrowed more, and people remember their sorrows in after-years when their angers are forgotten and have left only a blank in their minds.

George Garnier, Fanny Garnier's husband, had belonged to that sect of people who have an odd fancy in their world for making themselves and other folks as miserable as they possibly can—for worrying and wearying and torturing, for doubting and trembling, for believing far more eagerly in justice (or retribution, which is their idea of justice) than in mercy. Terror has a strange morbid attraction for these folks—mistrust, for all they say, seems to be the motive power of their lives : they gladly offer pain and tears and penitence as a ghastly propitiatory. They are of all religions and creeds ; they are found with black skins and woolly heads, building up their altars and offering their human sacrifices in the unknown African deserts ; they are chipping and chopping themselves before their emerald-nosed idols, who sit squatting in unclean temples ; they are living in the streets and houses all round about us, in George Garnier's pleasant old cottage outside the great Hammersley city, or at number five, and six, and seven in our street, as the case may be ; in the convent at Bayswater, in the manses and presbyteries. You or I may belong to the fraternity, so did many a better man, as the children say. St. Simon Stylites, Athanasius, John Calvin, Milton, Ignatius Loyola, Savonarola, not to speak of Saints A, B, C, D, and E.

Mary poured Jack out a big cup of strong tea, and brought it across the lamp-lit room to him with her own white hands. Mrs. Garnier shivered as she heard his story. The tea smoked, the lamps burnt among the flower-stands, the wood fire blazed cheerfully, for Mrs. Myles was a chilly and weak-minded person, and lit her fire all the year round, more or less. Trevithic, comfortably sunk back in a big arm-chair, felt a grateful sense of ease and rest and consolation. The atmosphere of the little house was so congenial and fragrant, the two women were such sympathizing listeners ; Mary Myles' bright eyes lighted with such kindly interest ; while Mrs. Garnier, silent, available, sat with her knitting under the shade of the lamp. The poor fellow was not insensible to these soothing influences. As he talked on, it seemed to him that for the first time in his life he had realized what companionship and sympathy might mean. Something invisible, harmonious, delicate, seemed to drive away from him all thought of sin or misery and turmoil when in company

with these two kind women. This was what a home might have been—a warm, flower-scented, lamp-twinkling haven, with sweet still eyes to respond and brighten at his success and to cheer his failing efforts. This was what it never, never would be, and Trevithic put the thought away. It was dangerous ground for the poor heart-weary fellow, longing for peace and home, comfort and love; whereas Anne, to whom he was bound to look for these good things, was at Sandsea, fulfilling every duty of civilized life, and not greatly troubled for her husband, but miserable on her own account, hard and vexed and deeply offended.

Mrs. Trevithic was tripping along the south cliff on the afternoon of the next day, when the sound of footsteps behind her made her stop and look round. As she saw that it was her husband coming towards her, her pale face turned a shade more pale.

"Oh, how d'ye do?" Anne said. "I did not expect you. Have you come for long?" And she scarcely waited for him to come up to her, but began to walk on immediately.

Poor John; what a coming home! He arrived with his various interests, his reforms, his forthcoming letter in the *Jupiter*; there was the offer of the bishop's in his pocket—the momentary gladness and elation of return—and this was all he had come back to!

"Have you come on business?" Mrs. Trevithic asked.

"I wanted to see you and Dulcie," John answered; "that was my business. Time seems very long without you both. All this long time I have only had Mrs. Myles to befriend me. I wish—I wish you would try to like the place, Anne. The two ladies seem very happy there."

"Mrs. Myles, I have no doubt," said Anne bitterly. "No," she cried, "you need not talk so to me. I know too much, too much, too much," she said, with something like real pathos in her voice.

"My dearest Anne, what do you mean?" Trevithic said kindly, hurrying after her, for she was walking very fast.

"It is too late. I cannot forgive you. I am not one of those people who can forget easily and forgive. Do you think I do not know that your love is not mine—never was—never will be mine? Do you think gossip never reaches me here, far away, though I try to live in peace and away from it all? And you dare mention Mary Myles' name to me—you dare—you dare!" cried Anne, in her quick fierce manner.

"Of course I dare," said Trevithic. "Enough of this, Anne," and he looked as hard as Anne herself for a minute; then he melted. "Dear Anne, if something has failed in our home hitherto, let us forgive one another and make a new start in life. Listen," and he pulled out the bishop's letter and read it to her. "I need not tell you how much I wish for this."

His wife did not answer. At first he thought she was relenting. She went a little way down the side of the cliff and waited for him, and then

suddenly turned upon him. The wash of the sea seemed to flow in time with her words.

" You are cruel—yes, cruel ! " said Anne, trembling very much, and moved for once out of her calm. " You think I can bear anything,—I cannot bear your insults any longer ! I must go,—leave you. Yes, listen to me, I *will* go, I tell you ! My father will keep me here, me and little Dulcie, and you can have your own way, John, and go where you like. You love your own way better than anything else in the world, and it will make up to you for the home which, as you say, has been a failure on the whole." And Mrs. Trevithic tried to choke down a gulp of bitter angry tears.

As she spoke John remembered a time not so very long ago, when Anne had first sobbed out she loved him, and when the tears which she should have gulped away had been allowed to overflow into those bitter waters of strife—alas ! neither of them could have imagined possible until now.

They had been walking side by side along the beach, the parson trudging angrily a little a-head, with his long black coat flapping and swinging against his legs ; Anne skimming along skilfully after him, with her quick slender footsteps ; but as she went along she blamed him in her heart for every roughness and inequality of the shore, and once when she struck her foot against a stone her ire rose sore against him. Little Dulcie from the rectory garden spied them out afar off, and pointed and capered to attract their attention ; but the father and mother were too much absorbed in their own troubles to heed her, even if they could have despaired her small person among the grasses and trees.

" You mean to say," said Jack, stopping short suddenly, and turning round and speaking with a faint discordant jar in his voice, " that you want to leave me, Anne ? "

" Yes," said Anne, quite calm and composed, with two glowing cheeks that alone showed that a fire of some sort was smouldering within. " Yes, John, I mean it. I have not been happy. I have not succeeded in making you happy. I think we should both be better people apart than together. I never, never felt so—so ashamed of myself in all my life as since I have been married to you. I will stay here with papa. You have given up your living ; you can now go and fulfil those duties which are more to you than wife or children or home." Anne—who was herself again by this time—calmly rolled up her parasol as she spoke and stood waiting for an answer. I think she expected a tender burst of remonstrance from her husband, a pathetic appeal, an abandonment possibly of the mad scheme which filled her with such unspeakable indignation. She had not counted on his silence. John stopped short a second time, and stood staring at the sea. He was cut to the heart ; cruelly stunned and shocked and wounded by the pain, so that he had almost forgotten his wife's presence, or what he should say,

or anything but the actual suffering that he was enduring. It seemed like a revelation of a horrible secret to which he had been blind all along. It was like a curse falling upon his home—undreamt of for a time, and suddenly realized. A great swift hatred flamed up in his heart against the calm and passive creature who had wrought it—who was there before him waiting for his assent to her excellent arrangements; a hatred, indeed, of which she was unworthy and unconscious; for Anne was a woman of slow perception. It took a long time for her to realize the effect of her words, or to understand what was passing in other people's minds. She was not more annoyed now with Trevithic than she had been for a long time past. She had no conception of the furies of scorn and hatred which were battling and tearing at the poor fellow's kind heart; she had not herself begun to respond even to her own emotions; and so she stood quite quietly, expecting, like some stupid bird by the water's edge, waiting for the wave to overwhelm her. "Do you not agree with me?" she said at last. Trevithic was roused by his wife's question, and answered it. "Yes; just as you wish," he said, in an odd, cracked voice, with a melancholy jar in it. "Just as you like, Anne." And without looking at her again, he began once more to tramp along the shingle, crushing the pebbles under his feet as he went. The little stones started and rolled away under his impatient tread. Anne from habit followed him, without much thinking where she was going, or what aim she had in so doing; but she could not keep up with his strong progress—the distance widened and widened between them. John walked farther away, while Mrs. Trevithic following after, trying in vain to hasten her lagging steps, grew sad and frightened all at once as she saw him disappearing in the distance. Her feet failed, her heart sank, her courage died away all suddenly. Like a flame blown out all the fire of her vexation and impatience was gone, and only a dreary nothing remained. And more hard to bear even than the troubles, the pains, the aches, the longings of life, are its blanks and its wants. Outer darkness, with the tormenting fires and the companion devils, is not the outer darkness that has overwhelmed strong hearts with terror and apprehension. No words, no response, silence, abandonment—to us weak, loving, longing human creatures, that is the worst fate of all.

Anne became very tired, struggling after Trevithic. A gull flapped across her path, and frightened her. Little by little she began to realize that she had sent him away, and he was going. She could see him still; he had not yet turned up the steps from the cliff to the rectory garden, but he was gone as certainly as if she could no longer see him. And then she began to learn in a void of incredulous amaze, poor sluggish soul, that lie was hard, very hard, and terribly remorseless; that when you strike, the blow falls; that what you wish is not always what you want; that it is easy to call people to you once perhaps, and to send them away once, but that when they come they stay, and when they go they are

gone and all is over. Why was he so headstrong, so ungrateful, so unreasonable? Was she not right to blame him? and had he not owned himself to be in the wrong? Ah, poor wife, poor wife! Something choking and blinding seemed to smite the unhappy woman in her turn. She reached the steps at last that lead up the cliff to the rectory garden where little Dulcie had been playing when her mother left her. Anne longed to find her there—to clutch her in her poor aching arms, and cover her sweet little rosy face with kisses. "Dulcie," she called, "Dulcie, Dulcie!" her voice echoing so sadly that it struck herself, but Dulcie's cheery little scream of gladness did not answer, and Anne—who took this silence as a bad omen—felt her heart sink lower. In a dim way she felt that if she could have met Dulcio all would have been well.

She was calling still, when some one answered; figures came to the hall-door, half-a-dozen officious hands were outstretched, and friendly greetings met her. There was Miss Triquett who was calling with Miss Moineaux, and Miss Simmonds who had driven up in her basket-carriage, and old Mr. Bellingham trying in a helpless way to entertain his visitresses, and to make himself agreeable to them all. The old gentleman, much relieved at the sight of his daughter, called her to him with a cheerful, "Ah, my dear, here you are. I shall now leave these ladies in better hands than mine. I am sorry to say I have a sermon to write." And Mr. Bellingham immediately and benevolently trotted away.

With the curious courage of women, and long habitude, Mrs. Trevithic took off her hat and smoothed her straight hair, and sat down, and mechanically began to make conversation for the three old ladies who established themselves comfortably in the pleasant bow-windowed drawing-room and prepared for a good chat. Miss Simmonds took the sofa as her right (as I have said before, size has a certain precedence of its own). Miss Triquett, as usual, rapidly glanced round the apartment, took in the importation of workboxes, baskets, toy-boxes, &c., which Anne's arrival had scattered about, the trimming on Mrs. Trevithic's dress, the worn lines under her eyes. Mrs. Trevithic took her knitting from one of the baskets, and rang the bell and desired the man to find Miss Dulcie and send her; and meanwhile the stream of conversation flowed on uninterruptedly. Mr. Trevithic was well. Only come for a day! And the little girl? Thanks—yes. Little Dulcie's cold had been severe—linseed-poultices, squills, ipecacuanha wine;—thanks, yes. Mrs. Trevithic was already aware of their valuable medicinal properties. Mr. Pelligrew, the present curate, had sprained his thumb in the pulpit-door—wet bandages, &c. &c. Here Miss Simmonds, whose eyes had been fixed upon the window all this time, suddenly exclaimed,—

"How fond your husband is of that dear child Dulcie, Mrs. Trevithic! There she is with her papa in the garden."

"Dear me!" said Triquett, stretching her long neck and lighting up

with excitement. "Mr. Trevithic must be going away; you never told us. He is carrying a carpet-bag."

As she spoke, Anne, who had been sitting with her back to the window, started up and her knitting fell off her lap. She was irresolute for an instant. He could not be going—going like that, without a word. 'No, she would not go to him.

"O dear me!" said Miss Simmonds, who had been trying to hook up the little rolling balls of worsted with the end of her parasol, "just see what I have done." And she held it up spindle fashion with the long thread twisted round it and hooked.

"I think I can undo it," said Miss Moineaux.

"I beg your pardon, I—I want to speak to my husband," said Mrs. Trevithic, starting up and running to the door.

"He is gone," said Miss Triquett to the others, looking once more out through the big pleasant window. "Dear Miss Moineaux, into what a mess you have got that knitting—let me cut the thread."

"Poor thing, she is too late," said Miss Moineaux, letting the two ends of the thread fall to the ground.

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